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The Nation.

ONE LAST TIME:

THE CASE AGAINST THE WAR

By JONATHAN SCHELL

WOMEN WAGE PEACE • Liza Featherstone

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KEPTICS • Jason Vest

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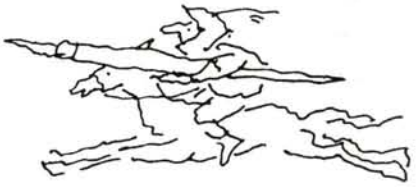

R. O. BLECHMAN

WITH HEALTHCARE & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Cleveland, Ohio

■ David Corn in "Healthcare for All—Now" [Jan. 6] succinctly lays out the paradox confronting universal healthcare advocates—a new opening for comprehensive reform alongside public distrust of big-government solutions. The federal–state partnership is the answer—national legislation that offers federal financial support to states implementing health plans that meet federal standards of affordability, comprehensiveness, cost containment and accountability. The states, choosing from a variety of systems, would decide how to structure healthcare delivery and financing. This plan addresses the puzzle of how to create legislation when strong majorities favor health reform but can't agree on its precise shape. It recognizes the variation in state health systems and reforms, and it finesses the rhetoric of devolution, states' rights and choice. National politicians whose opposition to reform has been cloaked in objections to specific plans will have to come clean, because the bill doesn't impose any one plan. KEN FRISOF

Universal Health Care Action Network

Los Angeles

■ What to call a universal healthcare system? Medicare for All. There are many advantages: First, Medicare is a functioning system covering tens of millions. It is tied to Social Security, so people would not even need a new number or card. Second, Medicare is easy to understand, in contrast to the Rube Goldberg contraption designed by Hillary Clinton and Co. to protect the insurance companies. Third, Medicare is popular, and Medicare for All would receive wide support, despite savage attacks from the insurance companies, which are hated by everybody. Many businesses would support the extension of Medicare because the new payroll taxes would be lower than the insurance premiums they pay today.

Fourth, Medicare, by using uniform rules across the country, has lower administrative costs, internally and for the users, the healthcare professionals and the hospitals, i.e., one form, the same everywhere, instead of the bewildering array of forms and provisions of various insurance plans. This would also eliminate expenses that have nothing to do with healthcare—sales, advertising, exorbitant executive salaries, insurance company profits, etc., all paid for by the hapless consumer. Fifth, Medicare for All would provide complete portability and continuity, when people move, change jobs, become unemployed or retire.

Sixth, Medicare for All would help the present system, which, we are told, will eventually run out of money. It would lower the average cost per person, since it would include the healthier young and middle-aged, in addition to the seniors, who have more medical problems.

If the Democrats would come out swinging for Medicare for All, they might just win in 2004. The public is enraged about this issue and waiting for them. ARIS ANAGNOS

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

■ I heartily agree with David Corn about the nondescriptive nature of the term "single payer." In light of Katherine Eban's cover story [Dec. 9] on the sorry state of public health services for everyday emergencies, let alone a bioterror attack, I suggest we call for "national medical defense" or, if you will, "Star Wards." The smallpox vaccinations are dispensed free, courtesy of the taxpayers. There's a principle buried there that "national medical defense" could unearth: The only real defense against new forms of disease, be it bioterror or E. coli, is a first-rate healthcare system that covers everyone, regardless of ability to pay. MICAH L. SIFRY

Chicago

■ In politics, as in healthcare, a sound policy (treatment) requires a correct diagnosis. The malady of our healthcare system is not Massive Health Insurance Deficiency; that is merely a horrible symptom. No, the diagnosis is Run Amok Commodification of Health Services.

David Corn accurately defines the remedy, "a universal, government-funded national health insurance system." But he errs in his trashing of the term "single payer," which no more impedes health reform than "abolition" delayed emancipation, or "woman suffrage" put off women's right to vote.

Our health system is imploding in skyrocketing costs, plummeting access and declining quality. The engine of this catastrophe is the takeover of the system by giant venture-capital corporations oriented to maximize profits. A single-payer government insurance system is no longer the best solution, *it is the only solution.*

Many good people have been euchred into falling for the current fool's gold—politicians and lobbyists calling for "universal healthcare." The American Association of Health Plans (insurance industry), the American Medical Association, the pharmaceutical oligopoly and our waffling leaders embrace this mush, touting failed incremental programs, vouchers, defined benefits and other tactics that booby-trap single-payer reform to aid continued corporate control.

Single-payer will recover vast administrative waste, exorbitant executive compensation and profit-taking; it will control drug costs and, at long last, address mental health and long-term care and emphasize preventive care. We should not pillory the term "single payer," but if Medicare for All or simply National Health Insurance with "everybody in, nobody out" works for you, go for it. QUENTIN YOUNG, MD

Physicians for a National Health Program

Amherst, Mass.

■ No, stick with "single payer." Use it. Explain it. Enact it. MARY L. WENTWORTH

HEALING THE 'MONEY CANCER'

Washington, DC

■ Mark Green's diagnosis of the money cancer in our democracy, "The Evil of Access" [Dec. 30], is right on the, well, mark. But his call for public financing and other legislated solutions fails to address the core problems. First, most Congressmembers are unwilling to abandon the very rules that have allowed them to achieve and maintain power. Second, voters do not trust that the problem will be solved by having the public pay for the hideously expensive campaigns of people who are so corruptible. The way out of the trap is to go directly to the people with a constitutional amendment limiting campaign spending and declaring that election expenditures are *not* protected by the First Amendment. Such a mobilization would appeal to most voters, who are convinced that money buys influence; generate populist outrage against corporate power; and perhaps inspire young people to get into politics. JEFF FAUX

Economic Policy Institute

San Francisco

■ As a campaign finance reformer who organized, with Common Cause, a successful effort for public financing of San Francisco's City Council elections, I agree with much in Mark Green's article, but he misidentifies cause and effect, citing the much-abused figure that "94 percent of the time, the bigger-spending Congressional candidate wins the race." Our research reveals unequivocally that Congressional candidates win mostly as a result of the lopsided partisan demographics that result from gerrymandered districts, *not* inequities in campaign finance. Using our predictive model, we have picked winners with stunning accuracy, 1,229 of 1,230 races in 1996–2002, without knowing *anything* about inequities in campaign finance. We've already predicted the winners in more than 350 of 435 House races for November 2004—yes, 2004—and financing will play a minor role in those races.

We must look to proportional representation electoral systems as used in European social democracies and places like Peoria, Illi-

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EDITORIALS

Voices of the Street

Even before the crucial February 14 meeting of the Security Council (after this issue went to press), a significant milestone was reached in the form of the proposal by France, Germany and Russia—later joined by China—to strengthen UN inspections in Iraq, and the opposition of France, Germany and Belgium to NATO war aid to Turkey. These diplomatic setbacks to the US war timetable drew cries of outrage from the Administration and its supporters in the media. Instead of discussing France's proposal reasonably, Secretary of State Powell dismissed it as unleashing a bunch of Inspector Clouseaus. Such is the level of debate by US officials and their apologists. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld lumped Germany with Cuba and Libya, and his sidekick Richard Perle proclaimed the United States must have a strategy to "contain" France, "our erstwhile ally." The *New York Times*'s Thomas Friedman sneered, "France is so caught up with its need to differentiate itself from America to feel important, it's become silly." Now members of Congress are yelling for trade sanctions against French products and reduction of US forces in Germany.

Far from wanting to "contain" France, many Americans applauded its proposals and found that its president spoke for them better than their own. Even before the antiwar rallies on February 15–16, it was clear that there was tremendous European support for the French and German position, including in Italy and Spain, whose governments are pro-US. With a recent poll showing 57 percent of Americans favoring an attack on Iraq, there is a desperate need here for a broad-based peace movement—one that avoids acts of petty sectarianism like the exclusion of Rabbi Michael Lerner from speaking at a San Francisco rally. Lerner, who has opposed the policies of Israel's Likud government, was blackballed for having criticized the anti-Israel line of ANSWER, one of the rally's sponsors. Lerner showed the right spirit when he said he would still demonstrate: "I'm very much opposed to the war, and I don't want Michael Lerner to become the issue." (For information on antiwar demonstrations, see www.thenation.com.)

Also disturbing was New York City's denial, on security grounds, of a permit for a February 15 peace march to the United Nations. This trampling on freedom of speech and of assembly fits the mold of serial assaults on civil liberties by this White House (which sent US Attorneys to argue for the ban) after 9/11. A federal court's easing of guidelines restricting NYPD surveillance of political groups and the Center for Public Integrity's report that the Administration is drawing up a sequel to the USA Patriot Act, which would allow secret arrests and deportations for political associations, are warnings of pitfalls ahead.

Beyond this, George W. Bush has deployed policies that isolate the United States and undercut the UN. He would take this country into a war under false pretenses. His doctrine of pre-emptive attacks on nuclear proliferators, starting with Iraq, is demolished by Jonathan Schell in his article on page 11. As Schell writes, the policy of "pre-emptively using overwhelming force has no application against a proliferator" with nuclear weapons. CIA chief George Tenet just testified that more countries than ever before are seeking nuclear weapons. Bush's doctrine endangers US security because it encourages them to acquire such weapons faster and defy the United States, as North Korea is now doing.

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COMMENT

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Republic or Empire?

As the senior American diplomat in Baghdad during Desert Shield, I advocated a muscular US response to Saddam's brutal annexation of Kuwait in flagrant violation of the United Nations charter. Only the credible threat of force could hope to reverse his invasion. Our in-your-face strategy secured the release of the 150 American "human shields"—hostages—but ultimately it took war to drive Iraq from Kuwait. I was disconsolate at the failure of diplomacy, but Desert Storm was necessitated by Saddam's intransigence, it was sanctioned by the UN and it was conducted with a broad international military coalition. The goal was explicit and focused; war was the last resort.

The upcoming military operation also has one objective, though different from the several offered by the Bush Administration. This war is not about weapons of mass destruction. The intrusive inspections are disrupting Saddam's programs, as even the Administration has acknowledged. Nor is it about terrorism. Virtually all agree war will spawn more terrorism, not less. It is not even about liberation of an oppressed people. Killing innocent Iraqi civilians in a full frontal assault is hardly the only or best way to liberate a people. The underlying objective of this war is the imposition of a Pax Americana on the region and installation of vassal regimes that will control restive populations.

Without the firing of a single cruise missile, the Administration has already established a massive footprint in the Gulf and Southwest Asia from which to project power. US generals, admirals and diplomats have crisscrossed the region like modern-day proconsuls, cajoling fragile governments to permit American access and operations from their territories.

Bases have been established as stepping stones to Afghanistan and Iraq, but also as tripwires in countries that fear their neighbors. Northern Kuwait has been ceded to American forces and a significant military presence established in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. The over-the-horizon posture of a decade ago has given way to boots on the ground and forward command headquarters. Nations in the region, having contracted with the United States for their security umbrella, will now listen when Washington tells them to tailor policies and curb anti-Western dissent. Hegemony in the Arab nations of the Gulf has been achieved.

Meanwhile, Saddam might well squirm, but even without an invasion, he's finished. He is surrounded, foreigners are swarming through his palaces, and as Colin Powell so compellingly showed at the UN, we are watching and we are listening. International will to disarm Iraq will not wane as it did in the 1990s, for the simple reason that George W. Bush keeps challenging the organization to remain relevant by keeping pressure on Saddam. Nations that worry that, as John le Carré puts it, "America has entered one of its periods of historical madness" will not want to jettison the one institution that, absent a competing military power, might constrain US ambition.

Then what's the point of this new American imperialism? The neoconservatives with a stranglehold on the foreign policy of the Republican Party, a party that traditionally eschewed foreign mili-

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tary adventures, want to go beyond expanding US global influence to force revolutionary change on the region. American preeminence in the Gulf is necessary but not sufficient for the hawks. Nothing short of conquest, occupation and imposition of handpicked leaders on a vanquished population will suffice. Iraq is the linchpin for this broader assault on the region. The new imperialists will not rest until governments that ape our worldview are implanted throughout the region, a breathtakingly ambitious undertaking, smacking of hubris in the extreme. Arabs who complain about American-supported antidemocratic regimes today will find us in even more direct control tomorrow. The leader of the future in the Arab world will look a lot more like Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf than Thomas Jefferson.

There is a huge risk of overreach in this tack. The projection of influence and power through the use of force will breed resistance in the Arab world that will sorely test our political will and stamina. Passion for independence is as great in the Arab world as it is elsewhere. The hawks compare this mission to Japan and Germany after World War II. It could easily look like Lebanon, Somalia and Northern Ireland instead.

Our global leadership will be undermined as fear gives way to resentment and strategies to weaken our stranglehold. American businessmen already complain about hostility when overseas, and Arabs speak openly of boycotting American products. Foreign capital is fleeing American stocks and bonds; the United States is no longer a friendly destination for international investors. For a borrow-and-spend Administration, as this one is, the effects on our economic growth will be felt for a long time to come. Essential trust has been seriously damaged and will be difficult to repair.

Even in the unlikely event that war does not come to pass, the would-be imperialists have achieved much of what they sought, some of it good. It is encouraging that the international community is looking hard at terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But the upcoming battle for Baghdad and the lengthy occupation of Iraq will utterly undermine any steps forward. And with the costs to our military, our treasury and our international standing, we will be forced to learn whether our republican roots and traditions can accommodate the Administration's imperial ambitions. It may be a bitter lesson. JOSEPH WILSON

Joseph Wilson, chargé d'affaires at the US Embassy in Baghdad during Desert Shield, was the last US diplomat to meet with Saddam Hussein. He is an adjunct scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC.

Filibustering on Estrada

Few of George W. Bush's judicial nominees have generated as much opposition as has Miguel Estrada. The AFL-CIO, the NAACP, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club and the American Association of University Women have all come out against placing Estrada on the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Despite the best efforts of Senate Judiciary Committee chair Orrin Hatch to portray the Estrada nomination as an example of Republican empowerment of Hispanics, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project reviewed Estrada's record on civil rights issues and announced their opposition. "A thorough review of his sparse record indicates he would probably make rulings that roll back the civil rights of Latinos. Simply being a Latino does not make one qualified to be a judge," argues MALDEF president Antonia Hernandez.

Now Senate Democrats, who blocked Estrada in committee while they were in control, are taking a stand. Minority leader Tom Daschle's announcement on February 11 that at least forty-one Democrats would support a filibuster to prevent a floor vote on Estrada's nomination set up the most serious confrontation yet over the President's drive to pack the federal courts with conservative judicial activists. Democrats overcame their caution about mounting floor fights to block judicial nominees in large part because of the refusal by Estrada and the White House to share basic information about the nominee. Democrats want to force the Bush Administration to release memorandums that Estrada wrote when he worked in the office of the Solicitor General in the Justice Department. "Until that information is provided, we will not be in a position to allow a vote to come to the Senate floor," says Daschle.

The Administration and Senate majority leader Bill Frist are determined to fight for Estrada, who has long been touted as a potential Supreme Court pick. And the President is already condemning the filibuster. But Democrats are arguing, with some force, that Estrada's refusal to cooperate with the Judiciary Committee makes this more than just another nomination fight. "By remaining silent Mr. Estrada only buttressed the fear that he's a far-right stealth nominee" who will "drive the nation's second most important court out of the mainstream," says New York Democrat Charles Schumer.

Will the forty-one Democrats needed to sustain it hold firm? "For now, yes," says Nan Aron, president of the Alliance for Justice (www.independentjudiciary.com). "I think the Democrats are mad about the Administration's refusal to release information that was requested by the senators, and I think they really are concerned by what they already know about Estrada." But, she adds, Estrada's nomination will be beaten only if Democratic senators—and moderate Republicans—hear from constituents. "If they continue to feel pressure from the grassroots, and if they don't buckle, this could be the fight where we signal that the Senate is not going to rubber-stamp extreme nominees." JOHN NICHOLS

Back to Segregation

Sit in classrooms, eat in lunchrooms, romp on playgrounds and wander the hallways in randomly selected public schools in America: It's right here, in the nation's increasingly segregated and astonishingly unequal schools, where one finds the most convincing case for keeping affirmative action intact.

The most recent statistics—compiled, analyzed and released by the Civil Rights Project, at Harvard—reveal that America's

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COMMENT

schools are now in their twelfth year of a continuing process of racial resegregation. The integration of black students, the new study shows, had improved steadily from the 1960s through the late 1980s. But, as of the 2000–01 school year, the levels have backed off to lows not seen in three decades.

It's true that the Supreme Court decisions and the enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that followed the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling forced the South to desegregate. The region went, between 1964 and 1970, from almost complete segregation to becoming the most integrated region. After 1974, however, school integration efforts outside the South were stymied by the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in *Milliken v. Bradley*, which prohibited heavily minority urban systems from including nearby suburbs in desegregation plans. School districts in the North usually run coterminous with municipal borders. Thus, Northern school districts usually reflect housing segregation rates, which are highest there. In the 1990s, a new set of decisions by a more conservative Supreme Court required that many large (and successful) desegregation plans be dismantled across the country.

Nearly 40 percent of black students in 2000 attended schools that were 90 to 100 percent black—up steadily from a low of 32 percent in 1988. In 2000, about one-sixth of blacks attended schools where 1 percent or less of their fellow students were white. In 90 percent of these schools, the majority of children were poor. The average black student, meanwhile, attended a school where just 31 percent of students were white.

Latino students are America's most segregated minority group and have become steadily more segregated in recent decades. The average Latino student now goes to a school that is less than 30 percent white, a majority of the children are poor and an increasing concentration of students do not speak English.

Segregation is not a word commonly associated with white students, though it should be. Whites are the most racially isolated group in America's public schools. Statistics from the 2000–01 school year show that the average white student goes to a school where 80 percent of students are white. Only whites who live in the South and West have experienced increased racial integration over the years.

Segregation is so deeply sewn into America's social fabric that the media rarely see it. And policy-makers, social thinkers, pundits and "education reformers" steer around the gross fact of segregation as if it were heaven-ordained, without insidious cause or acceptable cure.

But decades of research clearly demonstrates otherwise. Discrimination—past and recent past—created our segregated society. This is especially true of the poor ghettos and barrios whose schools have proven—with some celebrated but rare exceptions—impervious to reform efforts for a half-century. Nine times in ten, an extremely segregated black and Latino school will also be a high-poverty school. And studies have shown that high-poverty schools are overburdened, have high rates of turnover, less qualified and experienced teachers, and operate a world away from mainstream society.

It is astounding that the well-documented and grave implications of racially separate elementary, middle and high schools barely warrant mention by commentators—on all sides—in the raging debate over affirmative action. The most practical reason for maintaining racially conscious admissions policies of the sort used by the University of Michigan is found by facing the hard truth of segregation. Affirmative action may well be the only tool left with the potential to ameliorate the negative effects of a college applicant's prior twelve years of segregated schooling. Michigan, in fact, has recorded some of the highest school-segregation levels for decades.

Conservatives have suggested that the "10 percent" plans used by some universities (such as in Texas) would provide a fine race-neutral substitute for affirmative action. But in too many of the high schools affected by these plans, even the top students lack the knowledge and exposure to academic rigor needed to survive in a competitive college. The plans, ironically, provide far less access to well-qualified minority students who've been in academically rigorous, racially diverse schools but who, because of the school's many other well-prepared students, may not have been in the top 10 percent. The plans create a perverse incentive, therefore, to attend a low-performing, segregated school.

NOTE: *Because of an editorial error, last week's poem was incorrectly printed. This is a corrected version. Our apologies to Calvin Trillin (and to Cole Porter).* —*The Editors*

CALVIN TRILLIN

WE SPEAK NOT OF OSAMA

(With apologies to Cole Porter, the master, who wrote "My Heart Belongs to Daddy")

The towers fell. We knew full well
The villain in this awful drama.
His name held sway, till he got away.
Now we speak not of Osama.

We said we'd pound him once he's found
So flat that he'd cry for his momma.
Forget that jive, that "dead or alive,"
'Cause we speak not of Osama.

He's not even in the axis.
No, his evil did not make the grade.
For the thing he mostly lacks is
A country that we can invade.

He could be in Yokohama,
Or Bahrain or Belize or Dubai.
But to get back at Osama
We'll just pulverize some other guy.

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COMMENT

The Harvard Civil Rights Project study demonstrates that for more and more high school students—especially the white ones—a college campus like Michigan's would provide them their first chance to interact, learn, work, even just walk around in a multiracial environment that approximates the American society they'll soon join. And previously segregated minority students are still likely to attend high schools and live in neighborhoods that just plain do not offer them the opportunity to develop their full potential. Segregation is the social condition that shaped those proverbial "unlevel" playing fields. If we as a nation are content to let segregation rates rise, then we have a moral duty to permit affirmative action to play a double role as bridge and equalizer in a divided, unequal society.

GARY ORFIELD AND SUSAN E. EATON

Gary Orfield is co-director of the Civil Rights Project and professor of education and social policy at Harvard. Susan E. Eaton is the author, most recently, of The Other Boston Busing Story *(Yale). They are the authors of* Dismantling Desegregation *(New Press).*

The Supermax Solution

The billboard at the east entrance to the remote rural village of Tamms, Illinois, reads "Tamms: The First Super Max," and below, in lowercase letters, "a good place to live." Inmates at Tamms, who live in a kind of state-sanctioned suspended animation, would tend to disagree. Confined to their cells, alone, twenty-three hours a day, inmates eat, sleep, defecate, urinate, read and write (if they are able), watch TV or listen to the radio (if they are allowed) in the same 8-by-12 cell, often for years on end. The monotony, sensory deprivation and mandated idleness of supermax confinement is especially torturous for inmates who have—or who develop during incarceration, as many do—a serious mental illness. It is this fact that forms the crux of the lawsuit filed against the prison in 1999 by Jean Maclean Snyder, a lawyer at the MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Chicago Law School. Snyder charges that the treatment of mentally ill prisoners at Tamms amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, a violation of their Eighth Amendment rights.

The lawsuit represents four plaintiffs, three of whom have attempted suicide. The MacArthur suit, like other challenges to supermaxes, was filed on behalf of the mentally ill among the Tamms population, but these suits are, in Snyder's words, "a surrogate for generalized legal challenges to supermaxes," which rarely prevail in court.

In what has been interpreted as a direct reaction to the MacArthur Center's lawsuit, Tamms opened a special mental health wing, called "J-Pod," in February 2000. This high-surveillance unit receives inmates who are broken enough, according to Illinois Department of Corrections standards, to be relieved of continual isolation—in essence, Tamms created a special unit to combat the effects of its policies, rather than consider reforming the regime. Here inmates are allowed daily contact with mental health staff and some interaction with other inmates. Even in J-Pod inmates must "earn" their way out of Tamms by correcting their behavior. But as Snyder points out, many mentally ill inmates can't "behave," by definition. And for those stuck in solitary confinement, she adds, "there is nothing to be good at, there is no behavior allowed." (Since Tamms opened in 1998, only fourteen men have "graduated" from the supermax and been sent back to lesser-security prisons.)

Craig Haney, a national expert on the mental health of US prisoners and a professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has watched as supermaxes have spread unchecked across the nation. Haney was one of the original witnesses in a 1994 federal district court lawsuit against California's notorious Pelican Bay isolation unit. The decision in that case stated that the mentally ill could not and should not be made to endure supermax conditions. Haney remembers the day he and a colleague first toured the facility. "We drove most of the two hours back to the airport without saying a word. It was as though we had seen the face of the future of American corrections, and it was terrifying. They had come as close as humanly possible to creating a long-term storage container for people."

Inmates are not sentenced to supermax; they supposedly "earn" their way in through violent behavior, gang affiliation and an accumulation of disciplinary infractions in other prisons. The corrections sector insists these prisons work to keep both guards and other inmates safe, and historically, courts have deferred to their opinion. Currently, thirty to thirty-five states have supermax facilities, either existing as freestanding prisons or blocks of isolation cells in lesser-security prisons. At any given moment, there are about 25,000 people in long-term solitary confinement in the United States.

Because they provide J-Pod for their most desperate inmates, Tamms officials believe the prison is both escape- and litigation-proof. After three years in operation, Tamms remains about half-full, currently holding 265 inmates, though it has room for 500. The Illinois Department of Corrections says this is evidence of its careful and judicious selection; critics say it is evidence of gross overbuilding.

Under current Eighth Amendment jurisprudence, healthy inmates have no meaningful legal recourse. Attempts like Snyder's to file challenges on behalf of seriously mentally ill inmates have better prospects. Snyder, who is now waiting for a trial date, has ample evidence of the brutal conditions and paucity of treatment facing her mentally ill defendants (although the Southern District of Illinois is a difficult place for inmates to get a fair hearing). A recent decision in Boscobel, Wisconsin, made it clear that the state must keep the mentally ill out of its supermax; another recent case in Florida was settled, with the main concession being, once again, that mentally ill inmates have no place in supermax confinement. Still, in each of these cases the basic supermax paradigm was reaffirmed. So the "normal resilience" inmates will remain in their cells, keeping track of time by the sound of the metal meal carts clanking down the wings. Ironically, their best hope for transfer or legal redress may be their own psychological collapse.

REGAN GOOD

Regan Good is a writer based in New York City.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The Great 'Intelligence' Fraud

Events do rush by us in a blur, I know, but let's not abandon Secretary of State Colin Powell's February 5 UN speech to the graveyard of history without one last backward glance. It was, after all, billed by the President as a conclusive intelligence briefing on exactly how Saddam Hussein has been concealing his weapons of mass destruction, and how he's hand in glove with Al Qaeda.

Now, when the Commander in Chief states publicly that his Secretary of State will deliver the goods, we can be safe in assuming he's been assured that, yes, the US intelligence "community" has indeed got the goods. But less than a week after Powell's speech it looked as though its major claims were at best speculative and at worst outright distortions, some of them derided in advance by UN chief inspector Hans Blix.

There was the supposed transporter of biotoxins that turned out to be a truck from the health department; the sinisterly enlarged test ramp for long-range missiles that was nothing of the sort; the suspect facility that had recently been cleared by the UN inspection teams; the strange eavesdropped conversations that could just as well have been Iraqi officers discussing how to hide stills for making bootleg whiskey. The promoter of the Iraq/Al Qaeda link, Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, turns out to be an imaginative liar trying to get a prison sentence commuted; and the terror cell Ansar al-Islam, a bunch of Islamic fundamentalists violently opposed to Saddam and operating out of Kurdish territory.

A few days later Powell cited Osama bin Laden's latest tape as confirming that Saddam and Al Qaeda are in cahoots. Actually it's mostly a vivid account, which has the ring of truth, of how bin Laden and his men in their Tora Bora foxholes survived ferocious US bombing with minimal casualties. He concludes by urging all Muslims "to pull up your pant legs for jihad" against the Great Satan. Of Saddam and the Baath, he says, "The socialists are infidels wherever they are, either in Baghdad or Aden. Such war which may take place these days is similar to the war between Muslims and Romans, when the interests of the Muslims came along with the interests of the Persians, who both fought against the Romans."

And of course there was the British intelligence report sent by Tony Blair to Powell, who commended it in his UN speech as particularly "fine." The report turned out to be a series of plagiarisms from old articles from *Jane's* and from a paper on Iraqi politics written by a student called Ibrahim al-Marashi, at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

The Marashi plagiarism represents an instructive parable on how "intelligence" reports actually get put together to fulfill a political agenda. From some enterprising work by freelance reporter Kenneth Rapoza, who worked on the Iraq Dossier story for the *Boston Globe*, it emerges that Marashi himself comes from a Shiite family in Baltimore. He has never visited Iraq and is keen to see Saddam toppled by US invasion.

Marashi's essay was published last September in the *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, a magazine run by the GLORIA Center (acronym for Global Research in International Affairs) in Herzliya, Israel. Its director is Barry Rubin, who was a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a hawkishly pro-Israel think tank, itself a spinoff of AIPAC. Rubin is part of a coterie that includes Daniel Pipes, Michael Ledeen and Richard Perle—who have been pressing for a US attack on Iraq. Marashi told Rapoza that the documents on which he based his paper came from Kanan Makiya, a well-known Iraqi exile and proponent of invasion favored by the State Department. Makiya claims to have some 4 million pages of documents seized in northern Iraq after Desert Storm.

So here we have a politically inspired document, spliced together by a Shiite student, published by an Israeli think tank hot for war, swiped off the web by Blair's harried minions and given to Powell as a masterpiece of British intelligence collection from MI6. Quite aside from the welcome damage done to Powell's credibility and to the war party in general, the saga vividly reminds us of just how much rubbish has been served up to the American people in the guise of reliable "intelligence." Remember how, amid the buildup to the Gulf War, the Pentagon invoked satellite photos of 265,000 Iraqi troops massed to invade Saudi Arabia?

Jean Heller, a journalist from Florida's *St. Petersburg Times*, persuaded her paper to buy two photos at $1,600 each from a Russian commercial satellite. No troops showed up in the photos. "You could see the planes sitting wingtip to wingtip in Riyadh airport," Heller says, "but there wasn't any sign of a quarter of a million Iraqi troops sitting in the middle of the desert."

The ridicule now being showered on Powell's Iraq Dossier won't slow the production of these absurd documents or hinder the endless flourishing of supposedly conclusive satellite photography or communications intercepts. If war does come, we can be sure there will be repetitions of the "misinterpretations" and "tragic errors" of the 1991 onslaught.

When my brother Patrick drove from Amman to Baghdad back at the end of the 1991 war he passed the hulks of oil tankers bombed to bits under the claim they were mobile Scud launchers. The single biggest atrocity of that war was the US bombing of the Amariya shelter in Baghdad. The Pentagon claimed it was a top-secret military command center. It wasn't. Absent its intended occupants, university professors, technocrats, ordinary Iraqi mothers and children had taken shelter there. Just another intelligence screwup, with several hundred dead mothers and kids as the price.

And yes, we are in the wake of the greatest intelligence failure in American history, for which not one intelligence head rolled. Instead, they gave the CIA even more money; and yes, its grateful chief, George Tenet, is sitting beside Powell in the UN Security Council. He should have been too ashamed to show his face in public. At least "M," in real life a closet case who liked to haunt low movie houses in search of trade, had the grace not to show his face in public. ■

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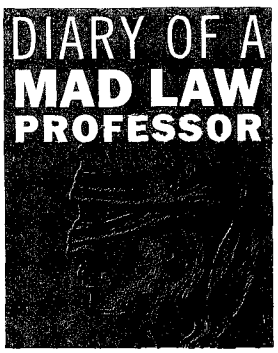
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Code Orange



The whole sad, messy world was on Code Orange alert on the day I left for England. I was on my way to present a lecture at Oxford University, part of a fundraiser for Amnesty International, and it was a very, very bad hair day. I was feeling unusually apprehensive because the lovely BBC was set to interview me the following morning, and I'd just learned that they were already advertising my coming with a titillating lead: "She's been called a troublemaker, hostile and anti-white. We'll see what Patricia Williams has to say in response to that."

It had been a hard day even before that, though. My son had started the morning by juggling apples and oranges recklessly and badly; one of the apples magically grew wings and cracked the dining room window. We'd patched it with duct tape and a jumbo-sized clear plastic garbage bag.

"Look Mummy," he said, trying to cheer us both up. "Homeland Security."

"Safe at last," I agreed.

It was snowing hard in the world beyond our windows. A foot and a half with more to come. On National Public Radio, the news sounded like bad Swiftian parody. An Eighth Circuit Appeals Court judge had ruled that a deranged prisoner on death row could be forced to take an antipsychotic medication to make him sane enough to execute. The drugs were generally beneficial to the prisoner, according to the court. "Eligibility for execution is the only unwanted consequence of the medication." The devil is always in the details, I suppose.

Meanwhile, John Ashcroft was pressing for more frequent executions. While many have worried that a disproportionate number of minorities are given capital sentences, Ashcroft was pushing the State of New York to speed up its machinery of death by executing ten minority inmates, despite the more lenient recommendations of prosecutors. Ashcroft said he was doing it to promote equality in the administration of justice. Geographic equality, it turns out—apparently New York is just going to have to do more to catch up with Texas, league champion of executioners.

Texas is, after all, such a shining example of the power of deterrence. The tabloids were busy that day, hungrily lapping up the taut, made-for-TV drama of the Clara Harris trial. Harris allegedly ran over her husband a good two or three times with her silver S-Class Mercedes because he'd cheated on her. She'd planned to have breast enlargement for him, she wept from the stand. She'd gone to the tanning salon for him, quit her job as a dentist for him. Polls showed Texans surprisingly sympathetic to these claims of a woman wronged. In contrast to the Eighth Circuit's attempt to craft a theory of temporary sanity for purposes of execution, Harris called her dead husband's family to support her defense of temporary insanity, exempting her from the electric chair. It was a marriage "made in heaven," according to her mother-in-law, a union torn asunder only by a series of "mistakes" made by "two of the finest people I know," according to her father-in-law. In an odd twist, Harris's brother-in-law, Gerald, turns out to have been a psychologist who testified last year in the trial of Andrea Yates, a genuinely psychotic woman who drowned all five of her children. Yates was medicated to sufficient degree for her to be found competent to stand trial; she is now serving a life sentence. If life is not cheap in Texas, it certainly is complicated.

My neighbor came to drive me to the airport. He pulled up in front of my door, applied the brakes and slid into a snowbank from which he could not extricate himself. We decided to take my car. I was tired from last-minute packing. Foolishly I let him drive. He backed out of my driveway, skated across the road and over an embankment, tobogganing down the hill to rest gently against the trunk of a most forgiving tree. We were OK. Life is precious. I did want to execute him, though.

I made the plane, against all odds. As they processed my ticket, I read a large sign assuring the public that if anything happened to us, the Warsaw Convention limited the airline's liability to $10,000 a head. I couldn't help thinking about the recent news from Colorado, where the status of pets may be upgraded from "property" to "companions." That means that in the event of their demise, the bereaved may sue not just for fair market value but for up to $100,000 in emotional suffering.

I found my seat in coach and settled in gratefully. I perused the airplane literature. There was a story about an ad agency in London that is hiring college students who agree to have advertisements temporarily tattooed on their foreheads. The students agree to be out and about for at least three or four hours a day (or risk being nailed by the agency's "mystery shoppers," who monitor their whereabouts). The ideal head belongs to someone "cool, reasonably fashionable, and good with the ladies."

I browsed through another magazine and found a story about young Marines in North Carolina who were getting ready to ship out to unspecified parts of the world. They were having the information on their dog tags permanently tattooed onto their bodies. "Meat tags," they called them. They felt they needed them "in case they're blown in half. Then at least some part of them can come back to their folks."

In the seat behind me, a man was talking to the woman sitting beside him. "The problem is Islam," he was saying. "The real evil is Islam." I looked around the plane. It was full of anxious faces, fearful faces of every class, race, religion on earth. Everyone was tensely evaluating everyone else for signs of inherent evil.

When we got to London, the city was on high alert. Heathrow was awash with heavily armed soldiers. I presented myself at customs. The officer looked at my passport, squinted at me, looked back at the picture unhappily.

"You cut your hair," he said curtly.

"I guess it was a mistake," I answered, not wanting to be a troublemaker.

"It'll grow," he said and handed me back my passport. I walked forth into the city, wishing I had a little of that sanity-inducing medication before meeting my fate on Radio 4. ■

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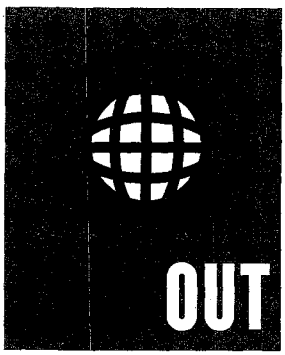
NAOMI KLEIN

Venezuela's Media Coup

Poor Endy Chávez, outfielder for the Navegantes del Magallanes, one of Venezuela's big baseball teams. Every time he comes up to bat, the local TV sportscasters start in with the jokes. "Here comes Chávez. No, not the pro-Cuban dictator Chávez, the other Chávez." Or "This Chávez hits baseballs, not the Venezuelan people."



In Venezuela, even color commentators are enlisted in the commercial media's open bid to oust the democratically elected government of Hugo Chávez. Andrés Izarra, a Venezuelan television journalist, says that the campaign has done so much violence to truthful information on the national airwaves that the four private TV stations have effectively forfeited their right to broadcast. "I think their licenses should be revoked," he says.

It's the sort of extreme pronouncement one has come to expect from Chávez, known for nicknaming the stations "the four horsemen of the apocalypse." Izarra, however, is harder to dismiss. A squeaky clean made-for-TV type, he worked as assignment editor in charge of Latin America at CNN en Español until he was hired as news production manager for Venezuela's highest-rated newscast, *El Observador* on RCTV.

On April 13, 2002, the day after business leader Pedro Carmona briefly seized power, Izarra quit that job under what he describes as "extreme emotional stress." Ever since, he has been sounding the alarm about the threat posed to democracy when the media decide to abandon journalism and pour all their persuasive powers into winning a war being waged over oil.

Venezuela's private television stations are owned by wealthy families with serious financial stakes in defeating Chávez. Venevisión, the most-watched network, is owned by Gustavo Cisneros, a mogul dubbed "the joint venture king" by the *New York Post*. The Cisneros Group has partnered with many top US brands—from AOL and Coca-Cola to Pizza Hut and Playboy—becoming a gatekeeper to the Latin American market.

Cisneros is also a tireless proselytizer for continental free trade, telling the world, as he did in a 1999 profile in *LatinCEO* magazine, that "Latin America is now fully committed to free trade, and fully committed to globalization.... As a continent it has made a choice." But with Latin American voters choosing politicians like Chávez, that has been looking like false advertising, selling a consensus that doesn't exist.

All this helps explain why, in the days leading up to the April coup, Venevisión, RCTV, Globovisión and Televen replaced regular programming with relentless anti-Chávez speeches, interrupted only for commercials calling on viewers to take to the streets: "Not one step backward. Out! Leave now!" The ads were sponsored by the oil industry, but the stations carried them free, as "public service announcements."

They went further: On the night of the coup, Cisneros's station played host to meetings among the plotters, including Carmona. The president of Venezuela's broadcasting chamber co-signed the decree dissolving the elected National Assembly. And while the stations openly rejoiced at news of Chávez's "resignation," when pro-Chávez forces mobilized for his return a total news blackout was imposed.

Izarra says he received clear instructions: "No information on Chávez, his followers, his ministers, and all others that could in any way be related to him." He watched with horror as his bosses actively suppressed breaking news. Izarra says that on the day of the coup, RCTV had a report from a US affiliate that Chávez had not resigned but had been kidnapped and jailed. It didn't make the news. Mexico, Argentina and France condemned the coup and refused to recognize the new government. RCTV knew but didn't tell.

When Chávez finally returned to the Miraflores Palace, the stations gave up on covering the news entirely. On one of the most important days in Venezuela's history, they aired *Pretty Woman* and Tom & Jerry cartoons. "We had a reporter in Miraflores and knew that it had been retaken by the Chávistas," Izarra says. "[but] the information blackout stood. That's when it was enough for me, and I decided to leave."

The situation hasn't improved. During the recently ended strike organized by the oil industry, the television stations broadcast an average of 700 pro-strike advertisements every day, according to government estimates. It's in this context that Chávez has decided to go after the TV stations in earnest, not just with fiery rhetoric but with an investigation into violations of broadcast standards and a new set of regulations. "Don't be surprised if we start shutting down television stations," he said at the end of January.

The threat has sparked a flurry of condemnations from the Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters Without Borders. And there is reason for concern: The media war in Venezuela is bloody, with attacks on both pro- and anti-Chávez media outlets. But attempts to regulate the media aren't an "attack on press freedom," as CPJ has claimed—quite the opposite.

Venezuela's media, including state TV, need tough controls to insure diversity, balance and access, enforced at arm's length from political powers. Some of Chávez's proposals (such as an ominous clause banning speech that shows "disrespect" to government officials) overstep these bounds and could easily be used to muzzle critics. That said, it is absurd to treat Chávez as the principal threat to a free press in Venezuela. That honor clearly goes to the media owners themselves. This fact has been entirely lost on the organizations entrusted to defend press freedom around the world, still stuck in a paradigm in which all journalists just want to tell the truth and all threats come from nasty politicians and angry mobs.

This is unfortunate, because we are in desperate need of courageous defenders of a free press at the moment—and not just in Venezuela. After all, Venezuela isn't the only country where a war is being waged over oil, where media owners have become inseparable from the forces clamoring for "regime change" and where the opposition finds itself routinely erased by the nightly news. But in the United States, unlike in Venezuela, the media and the government are on the same side. ■

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ARTICLES

THE CASE AGAINST THE WAR

By JONATHAN SCHELL

"All of us have heard this term 'preventive war' since the earliest days of Hitler. I recall that is about the first time I heard it. In this day and time...I don't believe there is such a thing; and, frankly, I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing." —*President Dwight Eisenhower, 1953, upon being presented with plans to wage preventive war to disarm Stalin's Soviet Union*

"Our position is that whatever grievances a nation may have, however objectionable it finds the status quo, aggressive warfare is an illegal means for settling those grievances or for altering those conditions." —*Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, the American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, in his opening statement to the tribunal*

I. The Lost War

In his poem *Fall 1961*, written when the cold war was at its zenith, Robert Lowell wrote:

All autumn, the chafe and jar
of nuclear war;
we have talked our extinction to death.

This autumn and winter, nuclear danger has returned, in a new form, accompanied by danger from the junior siblings in the mass destruction family, chemical and biological weapons. Now it is not a crisis between two superpowers but the planned war to overthrow the government of Iraq that, like a sentence of execution that has been passed but must go through its final appeals before being carried out, we have talked to death. (Has any war been so lengthily premeditated before it was launched?) Iraq, the United States insists, possesses some of these weapons. To take them away, the United States will overthrow the Iraqi government. No circumstance is more likely to provoke Iraq to use any forbidden weapons it has. In that event, the Bush Administration has repeatedly said, it will itself consider the use of nuclear weapons. Has there ever been a clearer or more present danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction?

While we were all talking and the danger was growing, strange to say, the war was being lost. For wars, let us recall, are not fought for their own sake but to achieve aims. Victory cannot be judged only by the outcome of battles. In the American Revolutionary War, for example, Edmund Burke, a leader of England's anti-war movement, said, "Our victories can only complete our ruin." Almost two centuries later, in Vietnam, the United States triumphed in almost every military engagement, yet lost the war. If the aim is lost, the war is lost, whatever happens on the battlefield. The novelty this time is that the defeat has preceded the inauguration of hostilities.

The aim of the Iraq war has never been only to disarm Iraq. George Bush set forth the full aim of his war policy in unmistakable terms on January 29, 2002, in his first State of the Union address. It was to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, not only in Iraq but everywhere in the world, through the use of military force. "We must," he said, "prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world." He underscored the scope of his ambition by singling out three countries—North Korea, Iran and Iraq—for special mention, calling them an "axis of evil." Then came the ultimatum: "The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." Other possible war aims—to defeat Al Qaeda, to spread democracy—came and went in Administration pronouncements, but this one has remained constant. Stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction is the reason for war given alike to the Security Council, whose inspectors are now searching for such weapons in Iraq, and to the American people, who were advised in the recent State of the Union address to fear "a day of horror like none we have ever known."

The means whereby the United States would stop the prohibited acquisitions were first set forth last June 1 in the President's speech to the graduating class at West Point. The United States would use force, and use it pre-emptively. "If we wait for threats

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to fully materialize, we will have waited too long," he said. For "the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act." This strategy, too, has remained constant.

The Bush policy of using force to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction met its Waterloo last October, when Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly was informed by Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju of North Korea that his country has a perfect right to possess nuclear weapons. Shortly, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, "We have to assume that they might have one or two.... that's what our intelligence community has been saying for some time." (Doubts, however, remain.) Next, North Korea went on to announce that it was terminating the Agreed Framework of 1994, under which it had shut down two reactors that produced plutonium. It ejected the UN inspectors who had been monitoring the agreement and then announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, under whose terms it was obligated to remain nuclear-weapon-free. Soon, America stated that North Korea might be moving fuel rods from existing reactors to its plutonium reprocessing plant, and that it possessed an untested missile capable of striking the western United States. "We will not permit..." had been Bush's words, but North Korea went ahead and apparently produced nuclear weapons anyway. The Administration now discovered that its policy of pre-emptively using overwhelming force had no application against a proliferator with a serious military capability, much less a nuclear power. North Korea's conventional capacity alone—it has an army of more than a million men and 11,000 artillery pieces capable of striking South Korea's capital, Seoul—imposed a very high cost; the addition of nuclear arms, in combination with missiles capable of striking not only South Korea but Japan, made it obviously prohibitive.

The lesson so far? If you want to avoid 'regime change' by the United States, build a nuclear arsenal—but be sure to do it quietly and fast.

By any measure, totalitarian North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is more dangerous than the mere possibility that Iraq is trying to develop them. The North Korean state, which is hard to distinguish from a cult, is also more repressive and disciplined than the Iraqi state, and has caused the death of more of its own people—through starvation. Yet in the weeks that followed the North Korean disclosure, the Administration, in a radical reversal of the President's earlier assessments, sought to argue that the opposite was true. Administration spokespersons soon declared that the North Korean situation was "not a crisis" and that its policy toward that country was to be one of "dialogue," leading to "a peaceful multilateral solution," including the possibility of renewed oil shipments. But if the acquisition by North Korea of nuclear arms was not a crisis, then there never had been any need to warn the world of the danger of nuclear proliferation, or to name an axis of evil, or to deliver an ultimatum to disarm it.

For the North Korean debacle represented not the failure of a good policy but exposure of the futility of one that was impracticable from the start. Nuclear proliferation, when considered as the global emergency that it is, has never been, is not now and never will be stoppable by military force; on the contrary, force can only exacerbate the problem. In announcing its policy, the United States appeared to have forgotten what proliferation is. It is not army divisions or tanks crossing borders; it is above all technical know-how passing from one mind to another. It cannot be stopped by B-2 bombers, or even Predator drones. The case of Iraq had indeed always been an anomaly in the wider picture of nonproliferation. In the 1991 Gulf War, the US-led coalition waged war to end Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. In the process it stumbled on Saddam Hussein's program for building weapons of mass destruction, and made use of the defeat to impose on him the new obligation to end the program. A war fought for one purpose led to peace terms serving another. It was a historical chain of events unlikely ever to be repeated, and offered no model for dealing with proliferation.

The lesson so far? Exactly the opposite of the intended one: If you want to avoid "regime change" by the United States, build a nuclear arsenal—but be sure to do it quietly and fast. As Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has said, the United States seems to want to teach the world that "if you really want to defend yourself, develop nuclear weapons, because then you get negotiations, and not military action."

Although the third of the "axis" countries presents no immediate crisis, events there also illustrate the bankruptcy of the Bush policy. With the help of Russia, Iran is building nuclear reactors that are widely believed to double as a nuclear weapons program. American threats against Iraq have failed to dissuade Iran—or for that matter, its supplier, Russia—from proceeding. Just this week, Iran announced that it had begun to mine uranium on its own soil. Iran's path to acquiring nuclear arms, should it decide to go ahead, is clear. "Regime change" by American military action in that half-authoritarian, half-democratic country is a formula for disaster. Whatever the response of the Iraqi people might be to an American invasion, there is little question that in Iran hard-liners and democrats alike would mount bitter, protracted resistance. Nor is there evidence that democratization in Iraq, even in the unlikely event that it should succeed, would be a sure path to denuclearization. The world's first nuclear power, after all, was a democracy, and of nine nuclear powers now in the world, six—the United States, England, France, India, Israel and Russia—are also democracies. Iran, within striking range of Israel, lives in an increasingly nuclearized neighborhood. In these circumstances, would the Iranian people be any more likely to rebel against nuclearization than the Indian people did—or more, for that matter, than the American people have done? And if a democratic Iran obtained the bomb, would pre-emption or regime change then be an option for the United States?

The collapse of the overall Bush policy has one more element that may be even more significant than the appearance of North Korea's arsenal or Iran's apparently unstoppable discreet march to obtaining the bomb. It has turned out that the supplier of essential information and technology for North Korea's uranium program was America's faithful ally in the war on terrorism, Pakistan,

Jonathan Schell, Harold Willens Peace Fellow at the Nation Institute, is the author of the forthcoming The Unconquerable World *(Metropolitan).*

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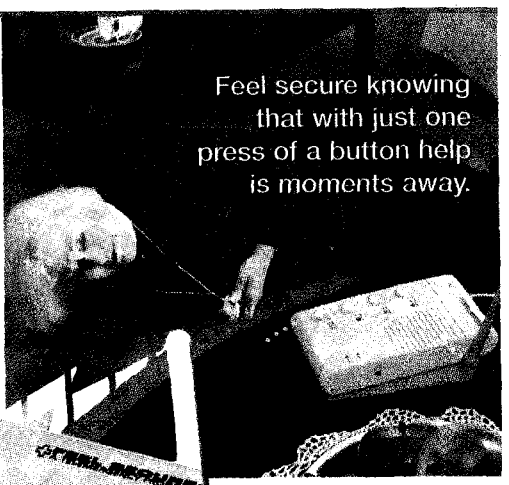

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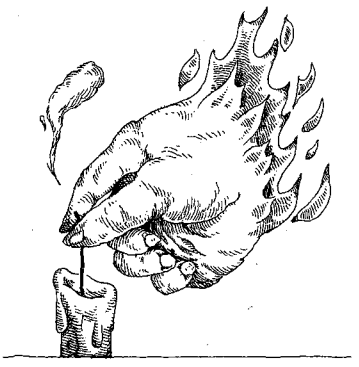
which received missile technology from Korea in return. The "father" of Pakistan's bomb, Ayub Qadeer Khan, has visited North Korea thirteen times. This is the same Pakistan whose nuclear scientist Sultan Bashiruddin Mahood paid a visit to Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan a few months before September 11, and whose nuclear establishment even today is riddled with Islamic fundamentalists. The BBC has reported that the Al Qaeda network succeeded at one time in building a "dirty bomb" (which may account for Osama bin Laden's claim that he possesses nuclear weapons), and Pakistan is the likeliest source for the materials involved, although Russia is also a candidate. Pakistan, in short, has proved itself to be the world's most dangerous proliferator, having recently acquired nuclear weapons itself and passed on nuclear technology to a state and, possibly, to a terrorist group.



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Indeed, an objective ranking of nuclear proliferators in order of menace would place Pakistan (a possessor of the bomb that also purveys the technology to others) first on the list, North Korea second (it peddles missiles but not, so far, bomb technology), Iran (a country of growing political and military power with an active nuclear program) third, and Iraq (a country of shrinking military power that probably has no nuclear program and is currently under international sanctions and an unprecedented inspection regime of indefinite duration) fourth. (Russia, possessor of 150 tons of poorly guarded plutonium, also belongs somewhere on this list.) The Bush Administration ranks them, of course, in exactly the reverse order, placing Iraq, which it plans to attack, first, and Pakistan, which it befriends and coddles, nowhere on the list. It will not be possible, however, to right this pyramid. The reason it is upside down is that it was unworkable right side up. Iraq is being attached not because it is the worst proliferator but because it is the weakest.

The *reductio ad absurdum* of the failed American war policy was illustrated by a recent column in the *Washington Post* by the superhawk Charles Krauthammer. Krauthammer wants nothing to do with soft measures; yet he, too, can see that the cost of using force against North Korea would be prohibitive: "Militarily, we are not even in position to bluff." He rightly understands, too, that in the climate created by pending war in Iraq, "dialogue" is scarcely likely to succeed. He has therefore come up with a new idea. He identifies China as the solution. China must twist the arm of its Communist ally North Korea. "If China and South Korea were to cut off North Korea, it could not survive," he observes. But to make China do so, the United States must twist China's arm. How? By encouraging Japan to build nuclear weapons. For "if our nightmare is a nuclear North Korea, China's is a nuclear Japan." It irks Krauthammer that the United States alone has to face up to the North Korean threat. Why shouldn't China shoulder some of the burden? He wants to "share the nightmares." Indeed. He wants to stop nuclear proliferation with more nuclear proliferation. Here the nuclear age comes full circle. The only nation ever to use the bomb is to push the nation on which it dropped it to build the bomb and threaten others.

As a recommendation for policy, Krauthammer's suggestion is Strangelovian, but if it were considered as a prediction it would be sound. Nuclear armament by North Korea really will tempt neighboring nations—not only Japan but South Korea and Taiwan—to acquire nuclear weapons. (Japan has an abundant supply of plutonium and all the other technology necessary, and both South Korea and Taiwan have had nuclear programs but were persuaded by the United States to drop them.) In a little-noticed comment, Japan's foreign minister has already stated that the nuclearization of North Korea would justify a pre-emptive strike against it by Japan. Thus has the Bush plan to stop proliferation already become a powerful force promoting it. The policy of pre-emptive war has led to pre-emptive defeat.

General Groves Redux

Radical as the Bush Administration policy is, the idea behind it is not new. Two months after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Gen. Leslie Groves, the Pentagon overseer of the Manhattan Project, expressed his views on controlling nuclear proliferation. He said:

> If we were truly realistic instead of idealistic, as we appear to be [*sic*], we would not permit any foreign power with which we are not firmly allied, and in which we do not have absolute confidence, to make or possess atomic weapons. If such a country started to make atomic weapons we would destroy its capacity to make them before it has progressed far enough to threaten us.

The proposal was never seriously considered by President Truman and, until now, has been rejected by every subsequent President. Eisenhower's views of preventive war are given in the epigraph at the beginning of this article. In 1961, during the Berlin crisis, a few of Kennedy's advisers made the surprising discovery that Russia's nuclear forces were far weaker and more vulnerable than anyone had thought. They proposed a preventive strike. Ted Sorensen, the chief White House counsel and speechwriter, was told of the plan. He shouted, "You're crazy! We shouldn't let guys like you around here." It never came to the attention of the President.

How has it happened that President Bush has revived and implemented this long-buried, long-rejected idea? We know the answer. The portal was September 11. The theme of the "war on terror" was from the start to strike pre-emptively with military force. Piece by piece, a bridge from the aim of catching Osama bin Laden to the aim of stopping proliferation on a global basis was built. First came the idea of holding whole regimes accountable in the war on terror; then the idea of "regime change" (beginning with Afghanistan), then pre-emption, then the broader claim of American global dominance. Gradually, the most important issue of the age—the rising danger from weapons of mass destruction—was subsumed as a sort of codicil to the war on terror. When the process was finished, the result was the Groves plan writ large—a reckless and impracticable idea when it was conceived, when only one hostile nuclear power (the Soviet Union) was in prospect, and a worse one today in our world of nine nuclear powers (if you count North Korea) and many scores of nuclear-capable ones.

The Administration now hints, however, that although its over-

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all nonproliferation policy might be in trouble, the forcible disarmament of Iraq still makes sense on its own terms. Bush now claims that "different threats require different strategies"—apparently forgetting that the Iraq policy was announced with great fanfare in the context of a global policy of preserving the world from weapons of mass destruction. The mainstream argument, shared by many doubters as well as supporters of the war, is that if Iraq is shown to possess weapons of mass destruction, its regime must be attacked and destroyed. Thus the only question is whether Iraq has the weapons. A team of "realist" analysts, organized by Stephen Walt of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, have given a convincing response: They are prepared to live with a nuclear-armed Iraq. "The United States can contain a nuclear Iraq," they write. They argue that Hussein belongs, like his idol Stalin, in the class of rational monsters. The idea that he is not deterrable is "almost certainly wrong." He wants power; he knows that to engage again in aggression is to insure his overthrow and likely his personal extinction. The record of his wars—against Iran, against Kuwait—shows him to be brutal but calculating. He is 65 years old. Time will solve the problem, as it did with the Soviet Union.

What is of most desperately immediate concern, however, is that America's pre-emptive war will lead directly to the use of the weapons whose mere possession the war is supposed to prevent. In the debate over the inspections now going on in Iraq, it sometimes seems to be forgotten that Iraq either *does* possess weapons of mass destruction (as Colin Powell has just asserted at the UN) or *does not* possess them, and that each alternative has consequences that go far beyond the decision whether or not to go to war. If Iraq does not have these weapons, then the war will be an unnecessary, wholly avoidable slaughter. If Iraq does have the weapons, then there is a likelihood that it will use them. Why else would Saddam Hussein, having created them, bring on the destruction of his regime and his personal extinction by hiding them from the UN inspectors? And if in fact he does use them, then the United States, as it has made clear, will consider using nuclear weapons in retaliation. Powell has asserted that Saddam has recently given his forces fresh orders to use chemical weapons. Against whom? In what circumstances? Is it possible that this outcome—a Hitlerian finale—is what Hussein seeks? Could it be his plan, if cornered, to provoke the United States into the first use of nuclear weapons since Nagasaki?

We cannot know, but we do know that White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card has stated that if Iraq uses weapons of mass destruction against American troops "the United States will use whatever means necessary to protect us and the world from a holocaust"—"whatever means" being diplomatese for nuclear attack. The *Washington Times* has revealed that National Security Presidential Directive 17, issued secretly on September 14 of last year, says in plain English what Card expressed obliquely. It reads, "The United States will continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force—including potentially nuclear weapons—to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies." Israel has also used diplomatese to make known its readiness to retaliate with nuclear weapons if attacked by Iraq. Condoleezza Rice has threatened the Iraqi people with genocide: If

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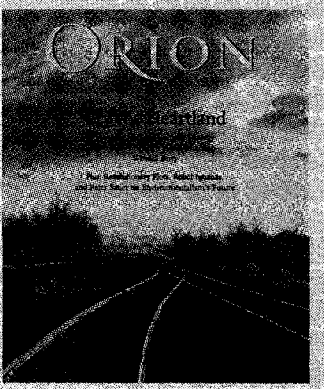

In the March/April issue of *Orion*

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Iraq uses weapons of mass destruction, she says, it knows it will bring "national obliteration." (Threats of genocide are flying thick and fast around the world these days. In January, Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes threatened that if Pakistan launched a nuclear attack on India—as Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has threatened to do if India invades Pakistan—then "there will be no Pakistan left when we have responded.") William Arkin writes in the *Los Angeles Times* that the United States is "drafting contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons." STRATCOM—the successor to the Strategic Air Command—has been ordered to consider ways in which nuclear weapons can be used preemptively, either to destroy underground facilities or to respond to the use or threats of use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States or its forces.

Oil and Democracy

Other critics of the war have concluded from the disparity in America's treatment of Iraq and North Korea that the Administration's aim is not to deal with weapons of mass destruction at all but to seize Iraq's oil, which amounts to some 10 percent of the world's known reserves. The very fact that the Bush Administration refuses even to discuss the oil question (the war "has nothing to do with oil," Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said) suggests that the influence of oil is moving powerfully in the background. One is tempted to respond to Rumsfeld that if the Administration is not thinking about the consequences of a war for the global oil regime, it is culpably neglecting the security interests of the United States. However, there is in fact no contradiction between the goals of disarming Iraq and seizing its oil. Both fit neatly into the larger scheme of American global dominance.

Still other critics place the emphasis not on oil but on political reform of Iraq and even the entire Middle East. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* is prepared to support Hussein's overthrow, but only if we "do it right"—which is to say that we devote the "time and effort" to creating "a self-sustaining, progressive, accountable Arab government" in Iraq. And this delightful government (can we have one at home, too, please?), in turn, must become "a progressive model for the whole region." "Our kids" can grow up in "a safer world" only "if we help put Iraq on a more progressive path and stimulate some real change in an Arab world that is badly in need of reform." Fouad Ajami, of Johns Hopkins University, likewise wants the United States to get over its "dread of nation-building" and spearhead "a reformist project that seeks to modernize and transform the Arab landscape," now mired in "retrogression and political decay." Michael Ignatieff, director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard, is also of the "do it right" school. His starting point, however, is the need to disarm Iraq. In his essay in the *New York Times Magazine* "The American Empire: The Burden," he begins by noting that if Saddam Hussein is permitted to have weapons of mass destruction, he will have a "capacity to intimidate and deter others, including the United States." Being deterred in a region of interest is evidently unacceptable for an imperial power, and forces it to remove the offending regime. Yet if the regime is to be removed, a larger imperial agenda becomes inescapable. By this reasoning Ignatieff arrives at the same destination as Friedman and Ajami: The United States must mount "an imperial operation that would commit a reluctant republic to become the guarantor of peace, stability, democratization and oil supplies in a combustible region of Islamic peoples stretching from Egypt to Afghanistan." We arrive at a new formula that has no precedent for dealing with nuclear danger: nonproliferation by forced democratization. Ignatieff acknowledges that a republic that turns into an empire risks "endangering its identity as a free people"—thus menacing democracy at home by trying to force it on others abroad. Nevertheless, he wants the United States to take on "the burden of empire."

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The Bush Administration, however, has given little encouragement to the evangelists of armed democratization. Notoriously, it has kept silent regarding its plans for postwar Iraq and its neighbors. But if its actions in the "war on terror" are any guide, democracy will not be required of Washington's imperial dependencies. The Bush Administration has been perfectly happy, for example, to extend its cooperation to such allies as totalitarian Turkmenistan and authoritarian Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—not to speak of such longstanding autocratic allies of the United States as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The United States has in fact never insisted on democracy as a condition for good relations with other countries. Its practice during the cold war probably offers as accurate a guide to the future as any. The United States was pleased to have democratic allies, including most of the countries of Europe, but was also ready when needed to install or prop up such brutal, repressive regimes as (to mention only a few) that of Reza Pahlavi in Iran, Saddam Hussein in Iraq (until he invaded Kuwait), Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (now Congo), Fulgencio Batista in Cuba, Park Chung Hee in South Korea, a succession of civilian and military dictators in South Vietnam, Lon Nol in Cambodia, Suharto in Indonesia, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, the colonels' junta in Greece, Francisco Franco in Spain and a long list of military dictators in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The Administration has in any case made its broader conception of democracy clear in its actions both at home and abroad. In this conception, the Administration decides and others are permitted to express their agreement. (Or else they become, as the President has said threateningly to the UN, "irrelevant"—although it's hard to imagine what it means to say that the assembled representatives of the peoples of the earth are irrelevant. Irrelevant to what?) Just as the Administration welcomed a Congressional expression of support for the Bush war policy but denied it the power to stop the war if that were to be its choice, and just as the Administration "welcomes" a vote for war in NATO and the UN but denies either NATO or the UN the right to prevent unilateral American action, so we can expect that the people of Iraq or any other country the United States might "democratize" would be "free" to support but not to oppose American policy. (Imagine, for example, that the people of Iraq were to vote, as so many other free peoples, including the American people, have done before them, to build nuclear

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arsenals—perhaps on the ground that their enemy Israel already has them and Iran was building them. Would the Bush Administration accept their decision?)

We do not have to wait for war in Iraq, however, to consider the likely impact of Washington's new policies on democracy's global fortunes. The question has already arisen in the period of preparation for war. The Bush Administration has not forced the world to read between the lines to discover its position. It proposes for the world at large the same two-tier system that it proposes for the decision to go to war and for the possession of weapons of mass destruction: It lays claim to absolute military hegemony over the earth. "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace," the President said in his speech at West Point. The United States alone will be the custodian of military power; others must turn to humbler pursuits. The sword will rule, and the United States will hold the sword. As the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis has pointed out, the policies of unilateral pre-emption, overthrow of governments and overall military supremacy form an integral package (the seizure of Middle Eastern oilfields, though officially denied as a motive, also fits in). These elements are the foundations of the imperial system that Ignatieff and others have delineated.

'America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge...limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace.' —G.W. Bush

However, empire is incompatible with democracy, whether at home or abroad. Democracy is founded on the rule of law, empire on the rule of force. Democracy is a system of self-determination, empire a system of military conquest. The fault lines are already clear, and growing wider every day. By every measure, public opinion in the world—its democratic will—is opposed to overthrowing the government of Iraq by force. But why, someone might ask, does this matter? How many divisions do these people have, as Stalin once asked of the Pope? The answer, to the extent that the world really is democratic, is: quite a few. In a series of elections—in Germany, in South Korea, in Turkey—an antiwar position helped bring the winner to power. In divided Korea, American policy may be on its way to producing an unexpected union of South and North—against the United States. Each of these setbacks is a critical defeat for the putative American empire. In January, the prime ministers of eight countries—Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland—signed a letter thanking the United States for its leadership on the Iraq issue; but in every one of those countries a majority of the public opposed a war without UN approval. The editors of *Time*'s European edition asked its readers which nation posed the greatest threat to world peace. Of the 268,000 who responded, 8 percent answered that it was North Korea, 9 percent Iraq and 83 percent said the United States. Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair is prepared to participate in the war without UN support, but some 70 percent of his people oppose his position. The government of Australia is sending troops to assist in the war effort, but 92 percent of the Australian public opposes war unsanctioned by the UN. Gaddis rightly comments that empires succeed to the extent that peoples under their rule welcome and share the values of the imperial power. The above election results and poll figures suggest that no such approval is so far evident for America's global pretensions. The American "coalition" for war is an alliance of governments arrayed in opposition to their own peoples.

In a defeat parallel to—and greater than—the military defeat before the fact in the field of proliferation, the American empire is thus suffering deep and possibly irreversible political losses. Democracy is the right of peoples to make decisions. Right now, the peoples of the earth are deciding against America's plans for the world. Democracy, too, has pre-emptive resources, setting up impassable roadblocks at the first signs of tyranny. The UN Security Council is balking. The United States' most important alliance—NATO—is cracking. Is the American empire collapsing before it even quite comes into existence? Such a judgment is premature, but if the mere approach to war has done the damage we already see to America's reputation and power, we can only imagine what the consequences of actual war will be.

II. The Atomic Archipelago

The Administration has embarked on a nonproliferation policy that has already proved as self-defeating in its own terms as it is likely to be disastrous for the United States and the world. Nevertheless, it would be a fatal mistake for those of us who oppose the war to dismiss the concerns that the Administration has raised. By insisting that the world confront the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, President Bush has raised the right question—or, at any rate, one part of the right question—for our time, even as he has given a calamitously misguided answer. Even if it were true—and we won't really know until some equivalent of the Pentagon Papers for our period is released—that his Administration has been using the threat of mass destruction as a cover for an oil grab, the issue of proliferation must be placed at the center of *our* concerns. For example, even as we argue that containment of Iraq makes more sense than war, we must be clear-eyed in acknowledging that Iraq's acquisition of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction would be a disaster—just as we must recognize that the nuclearization of South Asia and of North Korea have been disasters, greatly increasing the likelihood of nuclear war in the near future. These events, full of peril in themselves, are points on a curve of proliferation that leads to what can only be described as nuclear anarchy.

For a global policy that, unlike the Bush policies, actually will stop—and reverse—proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction is indeed a necessity for a sane, livable twenty-first century. But if we are to tackle the problem wisely, we must step back from the current crisis long enough to carefully analyze the origins and character of the danger. It did not appear on September 11. It appeared, in fact, on July 16, 1945, when the United States detonated the first atomic bomb near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

What is proliferation? It is the acquisition of nuclear weapons by a country that did not have them before. The first act of proliferation was the Manhattan Project in the United States. (In what follows, I will speak of nuclear proliferation, but the principles underlying it also underlie the proliferation of chemical and

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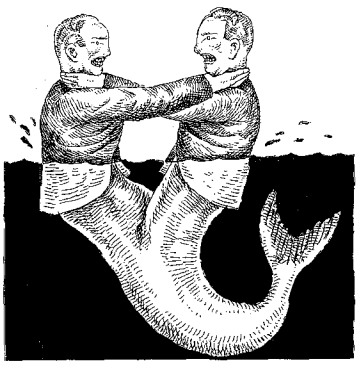
biological weapons.) Perhaps someone might object that the arrival of the first individual of a species is not yet proliferation—a word that suggests the multiplication of an already existing thing. However, in one critical respect, at least, the development of the bomb by the United States still fits the definition. The record shows that President Franklin Roosevelt decided to build the bomb because he feared that Hitler would get it first, with decisive consequences in the forthcoming war. In October 1939, when the businessman Alexander Sachs brought Roosevelt a letter from Albert Einstein warning that an atomic bomb was possible and that Germany might acquire one, Roosevelt commented, "Alex, what you are after is to see that the Nazis don't blow us up." As we know now, Hitler did have an atomic project, but it never came close to producing a bomb. But as with so many matters in nuclear strategy, appearances were more important than the realities (which were then unknowable to the United States). Before there was the bomb, there was the fear of the bomb. Hitler's phantom arsenal inspired the real American one. And so even before nuclear weapons existed, they were proliferating. This sequence is important because it reveals a basic rule that has driven nuclear proliferation ever since: Nations acquire nuclear arsenals above all because they fear the nuclear arsenals of others.

But fear—soon properly renamed terror in the context of nuclear strategy—is of course also the essence of the prime strategic doctrine of the nuclear age, deterrence, which establishes a balance of terror. Threats of the destruction of nations—of genocide—have always been the coinage of this realm. From the beginning of the nuclear age—indeed, even before the beginning, when the atomic bomb was only a gleam in Roosevelt's eye—deterrence and proliferation have in fact been inextricable. Just as the United States made the bomb because it feared Hitler would get it, the Soviet Union built the bomb because the United States already had it. Stalin's instructions to his scientists shortly after Hiroshima were, "A single demand of you, comrades: Provide us with atomic weapons in the shortest possible time. You know that Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The equilibrium has been destroyed. Provide the bomb—it will remove a great danger from us." England and France, like the United States, were responding to the Soviet threat; China was responding to the threat from all of the above; India was responding to China; Pakistan was responding to India; and North Korea (with Pakistan's help) was responding to the United States. Nations proliferate in order to deter. We can state: Deterrence equals proliferation, for deterrence both causes proliferation and is the fruit of it. This has been the lesson, indeed, that the United States has taught the world in every major statement, tactic, strategy and action it has taken in the nuclear age. And the world—if it even needed the lesson—has learned well. It is therefore hardly surprising that the call to nonproliferation falls on deaf ears when it is preached by possessors—all of whom were of course proliferators at one time or another.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The sources of nuclear danger, present and future, are perhaps best visualized as a coral reef that is constantly growing in all directions under the sea and then, here and there, breaks the surface to form islands, which we can collectively call the atomic archipelago. The islands of the archipelago may seem to be independent of one another, but anyone who looks below the surface will find that they are closely connected. The atomic archipelago indeed has strong similarities to its namesake, the gulag archipelago. Once established, both feed on themselves, expanding from within by their own energy and momentum. Both are founded upon a capacity to kill millions of people. Both act on the world around them by radiating terror.

India and the Bomb: The Proliferator's View

India's path to nuclear armament, recounted in George Perkovich's masterful, definitive *India's Nuclear Bomb*, offers essential lessons in the steps by which the archipelago has grown and is likely to grow in the future. India has maintained a nuclear program almost since its independence, in 1947. Although supposedly built for peaceful uses, the program was actually, if mostly secretly, designed to keep the weapons option open. But it was not until shortly after China tested a bomb in 1964 that India embarked on a concerted nuclear weapons program, which bore fruit in 1974, when India tested a bomb for "peaceful" purposes. Yet India still held back from introducing nuclear weapons into its military forces. Meanwhile, Pakistan, helped by China, was working hard to obtain the bomb. In May of 1998, India conducted five nuclear tests. Pakistan responded with at least five, and both nations promptly declared themselves nuclear powers and soon were engaged in a major nuclear confrontation over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh has explained the reasons for India's decision in an article in *Foreign Affairs*. India looked out upon the world and saw what he calls a "nuclear paradigm" in operation. He liked what he saw. He writes, "Why admonish India after the fact for not falling in line behind a new international agenda of discriminatory nonproliferation pursued largely due to the internal agendas or political debates of the nuclear club? If deterrence works in the West—as it so obviously appears to, since Western nations insist on continuing to possess nuclear weapons—by what reasoning will it not work in India?" To deprive India of these benefits would be "nuclear apartheid"—a continuation of the imperialism that had been overthrown in the titanic anticolonial struggles of the twentieth century. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, under which 183 nations have agreed to forgo nuclear arms, and five who have them (the United States, England, France, Russia and China) have agreed to reduce theirs until they are gone, had many successes, but in India's backyard, where China had nuclear arms and Pakistan was developing them, nuclear danger was growing. Some have charged that the Indian government conducted the 1998 tests for political rather than strategic reasons—that is, out of a desire for pure "prestige," not strategic necessity. But the two explanations are in fact complementary. It is only because the public, which observes that all the great powers possess nuclear arsenals, agrees that they are a strategic necessity that it finds them prestigious and politically rewards governments that acquire them. Prestige is merely the political face of the general consensus, ingrained in strategy, that countries

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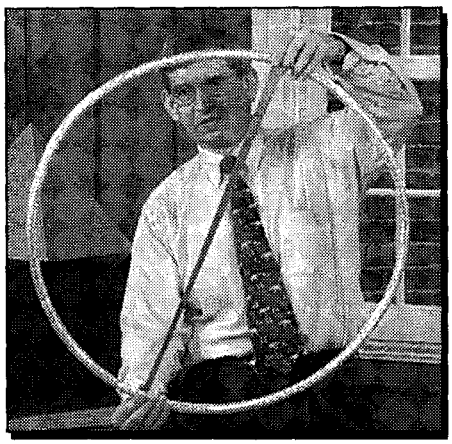

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MICHAEL STARBIRD (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1974) is a Professor of Mathematics and a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. He is deeply interested in bringing the intrigue and fascination of mathematics to those who are not necessarily mathematically oriented. The American Mathematical Monthly acclaimed his recent book, *The Heart of Mathematics: An Invitation To Effective Thinking*, co-authored with Edward B. Burger, as possibly the best math book—textbook or not—for non-mathematicians it had ever reviewed!

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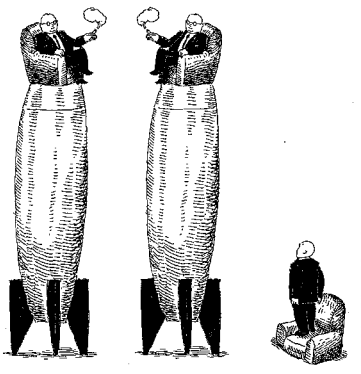
lacking nuclear weapons are helpless—"eunuchs," as one Indian politician said—in a nuclear-armed world.

Curiously, the unlimited extension in 1995 of the NPT, to which India was not a signatory, pushed India to act. From Singh's point of view, the extension made the nuclear double standard it embodied permanent. "What India did in May [1998] was to assert that it is impossible to have two standards for national security—one based on nuclear deterrence and the other outside of it." If the world was to be divided into two classes of countries, India preferred to be in the first class.

As Singh's account makes clear, India was inspired to act not merely by the hypocrisy of great powers delivering sermons on the virtues of nuclear disarmament while sitting atop mountains of nuclear arms—galling as that might be. He believed that India, with nuclear-armed China and nuclearizing Pakistan for neighbors, was living in an increasingly "dangerous neighborhood." The most powerful tie that paradoxically binds proliferator to deterrer in their minuet of genocidal hostility is not mere imitation but the compulsion to respond to the nuclear terror projected by others. The preacher against lust who turns out to take prostitutes to a motel after the sermon sets a bad example but does not compel his parishioners to follow suit. The preacher against nuclear weapons in a nation whose silos are packed with them does, however, compel other nations to follow his example, for his nuclear terror reaches and crosses their borders. The United States terrorizes Russia (and vice versa); both terrorize China; China terrorizes India; the United States terrorizes North Korea; North Korea terrorizes Japan; and so forth, forming a web of terror whose further extensions (Israel terrorizes... Iran? Egypt? Syria? Libya?) will be the avenues of future proliferation. It is thanks to this web that every nuclear arsenal in the world is tied, directly or indirectly, to every other, rendering any partial approach to the problem extremely difficult, if not impossible.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The devotion of nations to their nuclear arsenals has only been strengthened by the hegemonic ambition of the United States. Hitherto, the nuclear double standard lacked a context—it was a sort of anomaly of the international order, a seeming leftover from the cold war, perhaps soon to be liquidated. America's imperial ambition gives it a context. In a multilateral, democratic vision of international affairs, it is impossible to explain why one small group of nations should be entitled to protect itself with weapons of mass destruction while all others must do without them. But in an imperial order, the reason is perfectly obvious. If the imperium is to pacify the world, it must possess overwhelming force, the currency of imperial power. Equally obviously, the nations to be pacified must not. Double standards—regarding not only nuclear weapons but conventional weapons, economic advantage, use of natural resources—are indeed the very stuff of which empires are made. For empire is to the world what dictatorship is to a country. That's why the suppression of proliferation—a new imperial vocation—must be the first order of business for a nation aspiring to this exalted role.

India's Bomb: The Possessor's View

It's equally enlightening to look at India's proliferation from the point of view of a nuclear possessor, the United States. Nuclear arsenals are endowed with a magical quality. As soon as a nation obtains one it becomes invisible to the possessor. Nuclear danger then seems to emanate only from proliferation—that is, from newcomers to the nuclear club, while the dangers that emanate from one's own arsenal disappear from sight. Gen. Tommy Franks, designated as commander of the Iraq war, recently commented, "The sight of the first mushroom cloud on one of the major population centers on this planet is something that most nations on this planet are willing to go a long ways out of the way to prevent." His forgetfulness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki might seem nothing more than a slip of the tongue if it did not represent a pervasive and deeply ingrained attitude in the United States. Another revealing incident was Secretary of State Powell's comment that North Korea, by seeking nuclear weapons, was arming itself with "fool's gold." But the military establishment that Powell once led is of course stuffed to bursting with this fool's gold. Another example of the same habit of mind (I have chosen American examples, but the blindness afflicts all nuclear powers) was provided by some comments of President Bill Clinton shortly after India's tests of 1998. He said, "To think that you have to manifest your greatness by behavior that recalls the very worst events of the twentieth century on the edge of the twenty-first century, when everybody else is trying to leave the nuclear age behind, is just wrong. And they [the Indians] clearly don't need it to maintain their security." Wise words, but ones contradicted by more than a half-century of the nuclear policies, including the current ones, of the nation he led.

The reactions of some of America's most prominent thinkers on the nuclear question to India's proliferation were also instructive. Almost immediately, their belief in the virtues of nuclear arms began to surface through the antiproliferation rhetoric. Henry Kissinger, for instance, judiciously mocked Clinton's "unique insight into the nature of greatness in the twenty-first century...the dubious proposition that all other nations are trying to leave the nuclear world behind," and "the completely unsupported proposition that countries with threatening nuclear neighbors do not need nuclear weapons to assure their security." Kissinger, more consistent than Clinton, found India's and Pakistan's tests "equally reasonable." He thought Washington's best course was to help its new nuclear-armed friends achieve "stable mutual deterrence," and "give stabilizing reassurances about their conventional security." Kissinger even saw a silver lining for American interests in the hope that nuclear-armed India would help the United States "contain China" (the very China to which Krauthammer now turns to disarm North Korea). It was Kissinger's view, not Clinton's, that soon prevailed. America's own love affair with the bomb asserted itself. At first, the United States imposed sanctions on both countries, but soon they were lifted. In December of 2000 President Clinton paid the first visit by an American President to India since 1978, confirming that becoming a nuclear power was indeed the path to international prestige. The United States now has growing programs of military cooperation with both countries.

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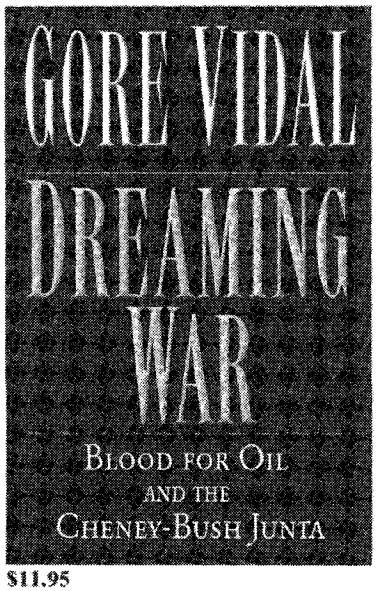

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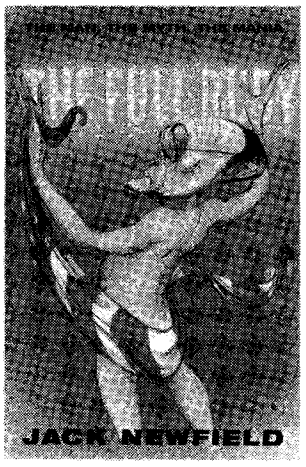

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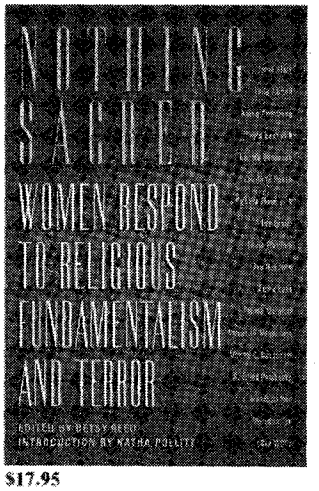

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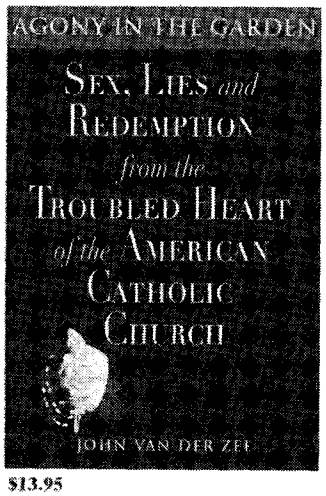

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Kissinger merely adjusted to the irreversible *fait accompli* of South Asian proliferation, as a realist should. He saw the tension between America's love of its own nuclear bombs and its hatred of others', and understood the problems this might cause for America's own arsenal. Could nonproliferation get out of control? Might it reach America's shores? "The administration is right to resist nuclear proliferation," he wrote, "but it must not, in the process, disarm the country psychologically."

III. One Will for One World

War in Iraq has not yet begun, but its most important lesson, taught also by the long history of proliferation, including the Indian chapter just discussed, is already plain: The time is long gone—if it ever existed—when any major element of the danger of weapons of mass destruction, including above all nuclear danger, can be addressed realistically without taking into account the whole dilemma. When we look at the story of proliferation, whether from the point of view of the haves or the have-nots, what emerges is that for practical purposes any distinction that once might have existed (and even then only in appearance, not in reality) between possessors and proliferators has now been erased. A rose is a rose is a rose, anthrax is anthrax is anthrax, a thermonuclear weapon is a thermonuclear weapon is a thermonuclear weapon. The world's prospective nuclear arsenals cannot be dealt with without attending to its existing ones. As long as some countries insist on having any of these, others will try to get them. Until this axiom is understood, neither "dialogue" nor war can succeed. In Perkovich's words, after immersing himself in the history of India's bomb, "the grandest illusion of the nuclear age is that a handful of states possessing nuclear weapons can secure themselves and the world indefinitely against the dangers of nuclear proliferation *without* placing a higher priority on simultaneously striving to eliminate their own nuclear weapons."

The days of the double standard are over. We cannot preserve it and we should not want to. The struggle to maintain it by force, anachronistically represented by Bush's proposed war on Iraq, in which the United States threatens pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons to stop another country merely from getting them, can only worsen the global problem it seeks to solve. One way or another, the world is on its way to a single standard. Only two in the long run are available: universal permission to possess weapons of mass destruction or their universal prohibition. The first is a path to global nightmare, the second to safety and a normal existence. Nations that already possess nuclear weapons must recognize that nuclear danger begins with them. The shield of invisibility must be pierced. The web of terror that binds every nuclear arsenal to every other—and also to every arsenal of chemical or biological weapons—must be acknowledged.

If pre-emptive military force leads to catastrophe and deterrence is at best a stopgap, then what is the answer? In 1945, the great Danish nuclear physicist Niels Bohr said simply, in words whose truth has been confirmed by fifty-eight years of experience of the nuclear age, "We are in a completely new situation that cannot be resolved by war." In a formulation only slightly more complex than Bohr's, Einstein said in 1947, "This basic power of the universe cannot be fitted into the outdated concept of narrow nationalisms. For there is no secret and there is no defense; there is no possibility of control except through the aroused understanding and insistence of the peoples of the world." Both men, whose work in fundamental physics had perhaps done more than that of any other two scientists to make the bomb possible, favored the abolition of nuclear arms by binding international agreement. That idea, also favored by many of the scientists of the Manhattan Project, bore fruit in a plan for the abolition of nuclear arms and international control of all nuclear technology put forward by President Truman's representative Bernard Baruch in June 1946. But the time was not ripe. The cold war was already brewing, and the Soviet Union, determined to build its own bomb, said no, then put forward a plan that the United States turned down. In 1949 the Soviet Union conducted its first atomic test, and the nuclear arms race ensued.

For the short term, the inspections in Iraq should continue. If inspections fail, then containment will do as a second line of defense. But in the long term, the true alternative to pre-emptive war against Iraq, war one day against North Korea, war against an unknowable number of other possible proliferators, is to bring Bohr and Einstein's proposal up to date. A revival of worldwide disarmament negotiations must be the means, the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction the end. That idea has long been in eclipse, and today it lies outside the mainstream of political opinion. Unfortunately, historical reality is no respecter of conventional wisdom and often requires it to change course if calamity is to be avoided. But fortunately it is one element of the genius of democracy—and of US democracy in particular—that encrusted orthodoxy can be challenged and overthrown by popular pressure. The movement *against* the war in Iraq should also become a movement *for* something, and that something should be a return to the long-neglected path to abolition of all weapons of mass destruction. Only by offering a solution to the problem that the war claims to solve but does not can this war and others be stopped.

The passage of time since the failure in 1946 has also provided us with some advantages. No insuperable ideological division divides the nuclear powers (with the possible exception, now, of North Korea), as the cold war did. Their substantial unity and agreement in this area can be imagined. Every other nonnuclear nation but one (the eccentric holdout is Cuba) already has agreed under the terms of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to do without nuclear weapons. Biological and chemical weapons have been banned by international conventions (although the conventions are weak, as they lack serious inspection and enforcement provisions).

The inspected and enforced elimination of weapons of mass destruction is a goal that in its very nature must take time, and ade-

One rallying point for a program of peaceful, negotiated disarmament leading to abolition is the Urgent Call to End Nuclear Danger, a national education fund launched in this magazine (June 24, 2002). Democrat Ed Markey introduced it as House Resolution 97 in slightly different form and will reintroduce it in the 108th Congress. It has the support of Peace Action, Women's Action for New Directions, the Council for a Livable World, Pax Christi, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and other organizations. To sign and contribute, go to www.urgentcall.org.

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quate time—perhaps a decade, or even more—can be allowed. But the decision to embrace the goal should not wait. It should be seen not as a distant dream that may or may not be realized once a host of other unlikely prerequisites have been met but as a powerful instrument to be used immediately to halt all forms of proliferation and inspire arms reductions in the present. There can be no successful nonproliferation policy that is not backed by the concerted will of the international community. As long as the double standard is in effect, that will cannot be created. Do we need more evidence than the world's disarray today in the face of Iraq's record of proliferation? Today's world, to paraphrase Lincoln, is a house divided, half nuclear-armed, half nuclear-weapons-free. A commitment to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction would heal the world's broken will, and is the only means available for doing so. Great powers that were getting out of the mass destruction business would have very short patience with nations, such as Iraq or North Korea, getting into that business. The Security Council would act as one. The smaller powers that had never made their pact with the devil in the first place would be at the great powers' side. Any proliferator would face the implacable resolve of all nations to persuade it or force it to reverse its course.

Let us try to imagine it: one human species on its one earth exercising one will to defeat forever a threat to its one collective existence. Could any nation stand against it? Without this commitment, the international community—if I may express it thus—is like a nuclear reactor from which the fuel rods have been withdrawn. Making the commitment would be to insert the rods, to start up the chain reaction. The chain reaction would be the democratic activity of peoples demanding action from the governments to secure their survival. True democracy is indispensable to disarmament, and vice versa. This is the power—not the power of cruise missiles and B-52s—that can release humanity from its peril. The price demanded of us for freedom from the danger of weapons of mass destruction is to relinquish our own. ■

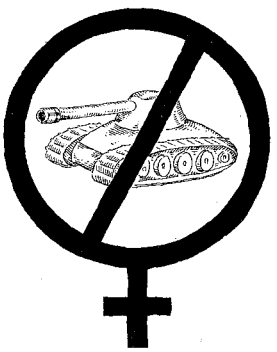
A CLEVER NEW WAVE OF FEMINIST ANTIWAR ACTIVISM MANAGES TO AVOID OLD CLICHÉS.

Mighty in Pink

LIZA FEATHERSTONE

WAGING

This article is part of the Waging Peace series, covering the movement that is emerging across the United States to oppose war on Iraq.
—The Editors



WESLEY BEDROSIAN

"It's not easy to be warm and fashionable at the same time," smiled Nina Human of Atlanta, who, ensconced in a billowing pink scarf, was succeeding admirably. It was a sunless late afternoon in January, and Human was at the Women's Peace Vigil in front of the White House, protesting the Bush Administration's impending war on Iraq. Human has never protested anything before, but she has spent many sleepless nights worrying about this war. She learned about the vigil, organized by the Code Pink Women's Pre-emptive Strike for Peace, on the web. "I told my husband and my boss: 'I'm going,'" she said.

The name Code Pink is, of course, a clever spoof on the Bush Administration's color-coded terrorism alerts. The idea grew out of the observation of organizers—including Starhawk, Global Exchange's Medea Benjamin and Diane Wilson of Unreasonable Women—that women were leading much of the current antiwar organizing and that more women than men opposed the war on Iraq.

In October, women all over the country began wearing pink to protests, while Benjamin and her cohorts conceived the Women's Vigil, a constant, rolling presence in front of the White House. The vigil began November 17 and will conclude with a week of actions in the first week of March, ending on March 8, International Women's Day. Code Pink–inspired vigils are regularly held in Utah, Texas and elsewhere, and a group of women in Albany, New York, will keep a rolling fast and vigil until March 8. Code Pink is not an organization but a phenomenon: a sensibility reflecting feminist analysis and a campy playfulness, influenced in style and philosophy both by ACT UP and the antiglobalization movement.

Though everyone is moved by the seriousness of the issue—many participants feel that the survival of the planet is at stake—the actions have been high-spirited. In December a Code Pink posse disrupted a press conference held by Charlotte Beers, a public relations expert hired by the State Department to market the war on terrorism, especially in Islamic countries. In the middle of the event Code Pink activists unfurled a pink banner, which admonished, CHARLOTTE, STOP SELLING WAR. An action in New York City on Martin Luther King Day targeted Laura Bush, who was speaking at the Sheraton, holding signs urging her to TELL GEORGE NOT TO GO TO WAR. Even when Code Pink actions are small, says Medea Benjamin, "we're dressed in pink, so it's hard to ignore us."

Code Pink is part of a rising tide of creative and memorable feminist antiwar activism. In early January a group of Point Reyes, California, women spelled out PEACE on a beach with their naked bodies, protesting Bush's "naked aggression." A few weeks later and many degrees colder, a group of New York women did the same. The Lysistrata Project, named for the Aristophanes character whose name means "she who disbands

Liza Featherstone is a New York–based journalist.

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armies" (Lysistrata organized Athenian and Spartan women in a sex strike in order to get men to stop making war), is working to make the connections between peace and reproductive freedom. The Raging Grannies, a guerrilla theater group with origins in the Canadian antinuclear movement, have also been a vibrant presence. These activists are joined by established international groups like Women in Black and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Historically, women's resistance to militarism has taken many forms—and ideas about it have varied. In her 1938 treatise *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf argued that as a woman, she had no reason to be patriotic, as the state denied her equal property and citizenship rights. She wrote, "If you insist upon fighting to protect me, or 'our' country, let it be understood, soberly and rationally between us, that you are fighting...to procure benefits which I have not shared...in fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."

Asked about the emphasis on mothering, activists say it hasn't played a significant role in today's feminist antiwar organizing.

Other feminists have suggested that whether because of biology or culture, women's traditional roles as caregivers—especially as mothers—lend us a more life-affirming worldview, one that frowns on war and violence. In this spirit, in 1961 a national organization called Women Strike for Peace organized 50,000 women nationwide to walk off their jobs and out of their kitchens, to demand that their elected representatives embrace a nuclear test ban. These women wanted to protect their children, but as historian Amy Swerdlow has pointed out, they also felt a motherly responsibility to the world. As one WSP participant put it: "No mother can accept lightly even the remote possibility of separation from the family which needs her. But mankind needs us too."

The otherwise admirable antinuclear activist Dr. Helen Caldicott has appealed to popular audiences with an even less subtle traditionalism. "As mothers we must make sure the world is safe for our babies," she once said in a speech. "I appeal especially to the women to do this work because we understand the genesis of life.... We have wombs, we have breasts, we have menstrual periods to remind us that we can produce life!"

No Code Pink participant that I interviewed discussed her womb or her period (for this I was grateful). But Nina Human, the protester from Atlanta, said she felt that "women need to get together because it's our sons and daughters they'll force to go over there." Besides, she added, "I think women are basically more peaceful people."

This sort of sentiment doesn't sit well with Jenny Brown, a Gainesville, Florida, activist who is a member of Redstockings (yes, this radical feminist group, founded in the 1960s, is still around). "Since when are women naturally peaceful?" asks Brown. "Harriet Tubman carried a gun when she ran the underground railroad." Brown is only 37, but her thinking comes out of a venerable tradition. In January 1968, radical feminists protested the Jeanette Rankin Brigade, an all-women peace formation. They held a funeral procession and buried traditional womanhood. As Brown explains, "They felt that appeals based on women's peaceful natures would only assure men that they were not a threat."

Particularly given the Bush Administration's ferocious attack on reproductive rights, now would be an especially bad time to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes or to exalt the cult of compulsory motherhood. The notion that women are biologically—or even culturally—destined to breed and to nurture could feed the forces of reaction. As radical feminists have long suggested, denying women's capacity for aggression—and militancy—also denies our power.

But asked about the emphasis on mothering, activists say it hasn't played a significant role in contemporary feminist antiwar organizing. "Some people like it," says Medea Benjamin. "But we really want to be inclusive. A lot of our friends don't have kids. We don't want it to sound corny, old or off-putting." Code Pink's mission statement emphatically rejects biological determinism:

> Women have been the guardians of life—not because we are better or purer or more innately nurturing than men, but because the men have busied themselves making war. Because of our responsibility to the next generation, because of our own love for our families and communities and this country that we are a part of, we understand the love of a mother in Iraq for her children, and the driving desire of that child for life.

Those standing in front of the White House had widely varying theories about why women should oppose war. Some pointed out that militarism is nourished, at least in part, by our ideas about masculinity. Gail Kielson, an activist who fights domestic violence in western Massachusetts, sees connections between the Bush Administration's bellicose, cowboy rhetoric and violence against women. Gesturing with some frustration toward the White House, she said she and others in her field have recently noticed "a curious, scary upsurge" in domestic violence: "There is a parallel between the President's attitude toward Iraq, and what men do in their homes."

The National Organization for Women has made a strong statement against war on Iraq, and has actively assisted the Women's Vigil from its Washington, DC, headquarters, which is just around the corner from the White House. NOW's statement does not mention women's peaceable natures, but focuses on practical objections to war with Iraq: Its massive cost would divert funds from education, healthcare and welfare, creating economic hardship, of which "women will bear the greatest burden." NOW also points out, "A U.S. invasion of Iraq will likely...[endanger] the safety and rights of Iraqi women—who currently enjoy more rights and freedoms than women in other Gulf nations, such as Saudi Arabia."

Feminists were divided over the war in Afghanistan: Some applauded the overthrow of the Taliban, while others objected on anti-imperialist, nonviolent or practical grounds. Yet there is little controversy on Iraq. Bush has feebly attempted to use feminism to justify invasion, fantasizing that a "democratic" Iraq would show "that honest government, and respect for women, and the great Islamic tradition of learning can triumph in the Middle East and beyond." But feminists aren't buying it; few see

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reason to hope war will relieve the miserable condition of the Iraqi people, women included.

NOW's statement also makes the point that militarism often hurts women in unique ways, a point well understood by a group of Okinawan women at the White House vigil. Their protest group was founded in 1995, when a 12-year-old Okinawan girl was raped by US soldiers. The women had traveled to Washington to protest the impending war on Iraq, and spoke excitedly through a translator. Said Noriko Akahane, "Women don't want the military anywhere."

In addition to its political openness, one of the most convincing reasons for Code Pink's success is that it's fun. As Benjamin puts it, "Women like hanging out with other women." Indeed, the mood at the vigil, and at its nearby (tiny) administrative office, is buoyant. "Can't you feel the energy?" says Robin Metalitz, a student at George Washington University. Maddy Bassi, who is taking time off from school to work with Global Exchange, has been coordinating the Women's Vigil—as well as a women's delegation to Iraq. "A few nights ago, I thought, 'I miss men!' So I went to a bar," she laughs. "But then, I wished I hadn't. I wanted to be back here!"

While some feminist activists are organizing against the war by using their identity and cultural power as women, many women—and men—are simply organizing with a feminist analysis. New Yorkers Say No to War (NYSNTW) is a good example, says Chris Cuomo, a feminist philosopher now teaching at Cornell University and active in the group, founded just after September 11. Its first meeting, held at Eve Ensler's apartment, was a who's who, as Cuomo puts it, of "the New York cliterati," including Urvashi Vaid, Laura Flanders, Sarah Schulman and other notables. Not all members of the group are women, but from the beginning, women have been running the show.

Even though the words "women" and "feminism" don't appear in the group's name, a gender analysis has always been at the forefront: The organization has held teach-ins on women and militarism, and hosted speakers from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. Many members of New Yorkers Say No to War come from the global justice movement, which has been deeply influenced by feminism, especially in its culture, which emphasizes consensus-building and communication.

Discussion in such groups is, for the most part, open and respectful. Like global justice activists, feminists have always tried to put political ideals into practice within their organizations, "creating another reality in a hostile context," as Cuomo puts it. "If peace isn't happening here," she asks, "how are we making it out there? There's an understanding that we're creating the new world here and now."

It is a measure of the success of this vision—and of feminism—that few feminists wish to exclude men from their organizations, and that so many male antiwar activists embrace feminist associations. The Women's Vigil welcomes men and has many male fans. As Medea Benjamin points out, "Men like to talk to women." Some local men come by every day. "They stand with us. It's nice because we're in control, and they're fetching things for us," explains Benjamin matter-of-factly. "Some men have baked us cakes."

Other men have been challenging militaristic masculinity on their own. At the Washington march on January 18, a group of tall, middle-aged men stood on the sidelines singing "We Are a Gentle, Angry People." A group of women singing that song—a classic of the "womyn's music" genre—might have seemed clichéd, dated, a bit wimpy. But in this rendition, the song sounded ironic and subversive, yet completely sincere: an optimistic glimpse of a different world. Just like Code Pink. ■

Letter From Iraq

by Jeremy Scahill

Baghdad

Iraq has become one bizarre series of contradictions. Construction of what the government boasts will be one of the world's largest mosques continues in Baghdad, as does work on a new presidential palace, described by one official as being "like our version of the White House." On Abu Nuwas Street, workers are putting the finishing touches on the base for a new sculpture by the much-revered Iraqi artist Mohammed Ghani. The work: a great flying carpet, inspired by one of the tales of *Thousand and One Nights*. In fact, it's difficult to go anywhere in central Baghdad without seeing workers building or repairing something.

But in homes throughout the country, there is a different sort of labor under way, and it is being carried out with much greater urgency. Families are digging wells for water and buying up canned goods, cooking gas and heating oil. Wealthier families are buying generators. Some Iraqis say they will leave the city and head for family farms or homes in more rural areas. Others say they will not leave, some of them fearing looting in the event of internal strife. Among ordinary Iraqis, the enthusiastic rhetoric of defending the country against a US invasion has now been replaced by the stark realization that the eleventh hour has arrived.

On the surface, the daily routine persists. The streets remain congested with cars in a country where twenty-five gallons of gas costs little more than $2. The markets are crowded. Old men slam dominoes on tables as they puff nargila pipes. Children have just finished their midterm recess and are returning to school;

Jeremy Scahill, a correspondent for the nationally syndicated radio program Democracy Now!, *is currently in Baghdad, where he is co-coordinating Iraqjournal.org, the only website providing regular independent reporting from inside Iraq.*

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their parents go to work. But almost no one harbors illusions. "All of us are scared because we tasted it before," said Aqbal Fartus, a primary school teacher in the southern port city of Basra. Fartus lives in the heart of the so-called no-fly zones, where US and British warplanes—with no United Nations mandate—have regularly bombed Iraq since 1998. On the morning of January 25, 1999, her oldest son, 6-year-old Heider, was killed by a US missile as he played in front of his home. His brother, Mustafa, lost two fingers in the attack and lives with shrapnel in his back. Four years after Heider's death, Fartus learned that she was once again pregnant. "We want this baby to improve our situation," she said—but she lost her baby two days after the interview. "It's hard," she said. "It's very, very, very hard because you can't do much other than wait for the bombs to fall on our city."

Meanwhile, the UN is already preparing for its role during the war and in the administration of a post-Saddam Iraq, as made clear in internal documents obtained by *The Nation*. One document says that "planning figures" for war foresee up to 800,000 Iraqis crossing the border into neighboring countries to seek asylum, with 500,000 asylum seekers stranded at borders inside Iraq. The greatest number, according to the report, would seek to enter Iran. Another document indicates that the UN is anticipating what it calls a "medium impact" scenario: "The military campaign encounters significant resistance, but ends after a more protracted period of two to three months. As a result of a large-scale ground offensive supported by aerial bombardments, there would be considerable destruction of critical infrastructure and sizable internal and external population movements." The report says there is a "major risk" of civil unrest in areas around Iraq that is "likely to result in high levels of casualties." In what could be a telling indication of the kind of timeline US-led forces are working on, the UN predicts it will be able to regain access to southern Iraq approximately thirty days after the start of the conflict but does not foresee reaching Baghdad until three or more months after the war begins.

Iraqi officials seem resigned to the idea that the ground battle against a US-led invading force will ultimately be fought in Baghdad.

A Western humanitarian official says that many UN workers have already begun quietly leaving the country in anticipation of massive attacks, although officially they are taking "vacations." By the end of February, some UN agencies will be operating with only skeletal staffs. The quiet departure, says the source, is intended to avoid creating panic and the impression that war is imminent. The UN has four "phases" describing its security status in the country. Officially, it remains at Phase I, the lowest status, but "they all know what is coming," said the official, who asked not to be identified. "It's just not official policy yet." Several foreign embassies have already withdrawn their personnel or say they will do so soon.

Perhaps the most revealing UN document is a draft report of the UN's Executive Committee on Peace and Security, dated January 7, 2003, which discusses potential scenarios involving UN assistance to a successor government in Iraq. "In the short term, the external force waging the war will be in command and may administer the country or impose a certain authority," the document says. "Gradually, after four to eight months, the UN may be given more room for limited responsibility in terms of governance and the establishment of security and justice." It goes on to say, "It is unlikely that the UN will play a major role similar to that in Eastern Slavonia [the region of Croatia that borders Serbia] or East Timor. The UN role is likely to be determined according to the request of either the new authority or the foreign forces that will provoke a regime change through war." In other words, the UN will do only what the United States tells it to do, or allows it to do.

The document discusses establishing a "transitional administration," saying UN agencies "might be asked to assist in nation and institution building." It envisions two major components of operations: "1) the first 100 days, and 2) Road Map for Reform (2 to 3 years of operations)." The document asserts that "even under a new type of government, it is likely that the country may slip back into its old ways" and that the UN "would also expect" that the new regime would make "political overtures to important neighbors and major powers at the same time as disciplinary measures against their agents in Iraq—the arrest and execution of Israeli, Iranian and US/UK agents." It continues, "In this mentality it would be quite consistent, indeed positively advisable, to allow the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights into Iraq to denounce the excesses of the previous regime while reminding all concerned of the where the [*sic*] new 'red lines' were placed."

The Iraqi government is well into war mode. Television is rife with videos of members of the Fedayou Saddam (Saddam Militia), marching in Hezbollah-type garb. Military parades are being staged for journalists. The Baath Party is giving weapons to anyone who signs up for the party, and gunshop owners report significant increases in purchases. While the official line is that there will be fierce resistance across Iraq, privately officials seem resigned to the idea that the ground battle against a US-led invading force will ultimately be fought in Baghdad. While the government may quite possibly consolidate its resistance in the capital and offer fierce resistance, it is unlikely it could do so elsewhere in the country.

The tension and fears in Basra and elsewhere in the south, with its overwhelming Shiite population, are clearer than in Baghdad. Already the region suffers like no other in Iraq. People are caught between government repression and a deadly US-led policy of sanctions and regular bombing. The area will be a major focal point of any war, as it borders Kuwait, a certain entry point for invading US forces. "We have learned a great lesson since the Gulf War," said a Basra resident who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal. "America told us to rise up and then watched the people get massacred in the streets. You can't imagine what happened here. This time, no one will leave their homes."

The hatred of the government in the south is clear, and there is little question that a change of government would be welcomed. But "we don't want the change to come through America's bombs," said another individual who requested anonymity.

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"Some people see it as enduring bombing, hoping to survive and then starting over without him [Saddam]. But most of us want a peaceful change brought about from within. We don't want anymore misery here."

There are rumors that Iraqi generals in the south are waiting for the right moment to rise up; the ordinary army there is staffed largely by unenthusiastic, poor, hungry soldiers who residents say will not defend the regime. But the government also has loyalists in the area, including an extensive network of secret police, as well as Baath Party and other militias. "All of them will fight for the regime, but the rest of us will stay in our homes and watch and wait," said a southern Shiite.

Hundreds of Iraqi imams, including those at the holy shrines at Najaf and Karbala, have signed on to a fatwa (a religious decree) calling for jihad against any invading forces. "This is not a war against Iraq, this is a war against Islam," says Abdul Rihad, the imam at the biggest Shiite mosque in Basra. He adds, "We don't like to fight. But if war is imposed on the Iraqi people, they should fight for their land, their blood, their family. But we do not want that, because this war will be a loser for both sides." Even those Iraqis in the south who said they would welcome a change of government also said they would fight US forces if they attempted to occupy their area. And perhaps that is what Saddam Hussein is banking on.

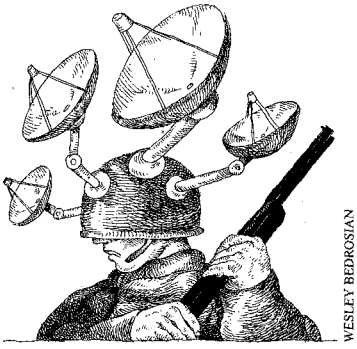
As the UN and the Iraqi populations wait, it is worth considering that the most striking fact about the UN documents is their acknowledgment that a new regime in Baghdad brought about by war would probably be much like the old one, sans Saddam Hussein. Such a conclusion reinforces the sense that there has thus far been no satisfactory answer to the question that millions of people around the world have been asking through protest for months: Why? ■

OFFICERS ARE RAISING SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT MANPOWER, MORALE AND TECHNOLOGY.

The Army's Empire Skeptics

JASON VEST

Over the past year the American intelligentsia has expended no small amount of cerebral capital in an effort to articulate, if not delineate, visions of empire. Whatever form a Pax Americana might take, it will almost certainly require expanded use of the US military. Although there is virtual unanimity of opinion in the ranks of the Army's officer corps that war with Iraq—the cornerstone of the new order—will likely result in a US military victory, *Nation* interviews with dozens of active-duty and retired officers, as well as reviews of recent military studies and articles, found that there is, nonetheless, a marked lack of enthusiasm in some segments of the officer corps not just for the Iraq mission but for its greater implications for the military as well as the society it defends.



WESLEY BEDROSIAN

Within military ranks, according to one midlevel officer, "one group believes that our Constitution is the right way to go for everyone and that we have a moral imperative to give everyone the world over the opportunity to have that device. You have another group that sees our military as a defensive weapon to use in the face of an actual threat to the nation, which means in this context enthusiasm about taking on Al Qaeda but not Iraq. Then there's a smaller group that believes political leaders, instead of really addressing problems and resource issues, are going to go out and empire-grab and disguise it as something else so we can feed a warped version of the American dream, in which we continue to consume more resources and produce more waste, rather than really struggle with what it takes to keep the American dream viable and inspirational in a world of 6 billion people."

Such opinions, said the officer—a respected, active-duty combat veteran and analyst well-known in military circles—are all subordinate to sworn oaths; "wherever any of us are told to go and fight, we will," he said. But, he added, what concerns many officers is how the debate over visions of empire overemphasizes the role of technology and ignores certain variables that just might make "empire-building" a bit more complex—and consequential—than many imagine. If not acknowledged and responsibly addressed now, these issues very well could mushroom into much larger problems, not just for the US military but for America itself.

The arcane nature of these problems all but assures their lack of wide recognition. Take, for example, the matter of personnel. Despite the wishing-will-make-it-so qualities of some in the pundit class (perhaps best summed up in one *Slate* contributor's declaration that "a condition of the new imperialism" is that troops "will not stay too long"), the most conservative estimate for the number of troops required in a post-Saddam Iraq is 50,000 for at least one year. Many military officers and civilian analysts—including some leading hawks—privately acknowledge that the number and time requirement will be vastly greater, perhaps lasting years and requiring forces that run to six digits. British troops have been told to anticipate at least three years of post-Saddam occupation duty.

While the Iraqi people may initially respond to the deposing of Saddam Hussein and his clique with euphoria, many officers do not expect a quick or easy transition to anything resembling stability or democracy; indeed, some who have made a close study of the region anticipate "spheres of simultaneous civil conflict all

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over Iraq," as one put it, that will tax resources as well as US public opinion. Officers also have real concerns about anti-US backlashes or acts of terrorism down the road—not just against occupation forces in Iraq but against Americans all over the world. These situations may require the dispatch of anything from small special operations detachments to scores of smaller expeditionary forces.

Yet today, infantry forces—to take just one part of the military—are less than half their Vietnam-era strength. An August 2002 Army conference found that two-thirds of the Army's Special Forces are currently spread out over eighty-five countries, and that "the rate of increased employment since 9/11 cannot be sustained within current structures." The conclave also concluded that "many military occupational specialties and organizations that are important...for winning the global war on terrorism, are of low density," and that the current force structure does not meet "the exigencies of the global war on terrorism," let alone long-term operations in Iraq. Robert Barry, the US diplomat who headed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission in Bosnia from 1998 to 2001, recently noted in London's *Observer* that "given the need to rotate units to their home bases and maintain readiness elsewhere," the United States and Britain won't be able to sustain an adequate Iraq occupation force.

Virtually ignored by pundits and others is the fact that in recent years the Army has been hemorrhaging junior officers.

Indeed, the manpower situation is so tenuous that in a recent issue of the Army War College's journal *Parameters*, one officer essentially called for accelerated outsourcing of war to entities that some refer to as "private military corporations" (PMCs) and that others less charitably characterize as mercenaries. As "the United States continues to pursue a national strategy of engagement and needs the ability to generate forces that can respond across the spectrum of conflict," Lieut. Col. Eugene Smith writes, "either a large force must be maintained or alternate solutions must be found. Private military corporations provide the United States the ability to respond across the spectrum of conflict by contracting out for required non-core or emerging capabilities.... Rather than a usurper of state legitimacy, the PMC can become an extension of the United States as a tool to further American strategic interests."

Given the dubious track record of PMCs (for example, DynCorp's women-trafficking in the Balkans; Airscan's involvement in the Colombian Army's bombing of civilians), this is the type of suggestion that cries out for more debate and consideration. "Is this really the direction we want to be going in, philosophically and practically?" asks one Special Forces captain who's seen service in the Balkans and Afghanistan. "Speaking from experience, locals can be hostile to or alienated by the sight of American troops. Put people in who are seen as America's Hessians, and it adds another dimension to perceptions of American arrogance. Americans might also want to think about why, when we're spending more money on the military than the next three dozen countries' combined military budgets, we don't have enough people—or enough people who know what they're doing, or enough basic gear for non-elite forces—to do the jobs at hand."

Indeed, virtually ignored by pundits and others is the fact that in recent years the Army has been hemorrhaging junior officers. "The simple fact is that coming into 2002, the Army was short thousands of captains," says Mark Lewis, a former Army Ranger now with a federally funded think tank. This is the type of thing that should give proponents of empire pause, as Lewis notes that captains are "the most pivotal" of all officers. "They're the commanders closest to the troops in garrison, training and combat. Yet the number of captains leaving the Army doubled from 1995 to 2001. Even in the face of the struggling economy of 2001, when unemployment skyrocketed and 2.4 million Americans lost their jobs, the attrition rate did not slow by even 1 percent."

Why the flight of talented, innovative young minds from the ranks? According to a number of recent studies, the personnel system—built around social Darwinism and continuously remodeled along corporate business lines—has created a situation in which officers are encouraged to spend less time with soldiers and more time playing the advancement game, and that the time spent soldiering isn't "quality time." A 1999 General Accounting Office investigation found that many Army training exercises are fatally flawed. A more recent Army study found that "junior officers are seldom given opportunities to be innovative in planning training; to make decisions; or to fail, learn, and try again." A 2002 RAND study found that in the past decade, field training opportunities for new officers had dropped by almost 50 percent.

And how is the Army addressing this? Recently, the service announced that it would simply start promoting young lieutenants to captain faster. Not only does this put already insufficiently seasoned officers in situations where they can find themselves way over their heads, but, says Maj. Donald Vandergriff, author of last year's critical personnel and doctrinal study *The Path to Victory*, it essentially amounts to "bribing people to stay, buying their loyalty, patriotism and moral strength to go in harm's way, based on the dehumanizing assumption that our officers and NCOs are mindless, undifferentiated, replaceable cogs in a machine."

There are those who make the argument that in an era of targets laser-painted by elite forces, technological advance compensates for less-than-optimal human elements. But at a time when some of the most crucial postwar military functions—infrastructure rehabilitation, military police, civil affairs, to name but a few—are almost exclusively the province not of active-duty but of part-time Reserve and National Guard units, training and experience count for a lot. As far as effective occupation-style rebuilding is concerned, officers who have been assigned to the Balkans are skeptical about what might come in Iraq, based on their experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo.

"The preoccupation with force protection kept us more apart from the natives, as well as keeping us from being truly effective in terms of addressing problems that I thought we were there to deal with," says one officer of his Balkans rotation. "I can't imagine it will be any different in Iraq." This view is echoed by a high-ranking British officer who did a tour with NATO in Sarajevo. "All the US written orders and briefings I got treated the whole of Bosnia as bandit country," he says, "with the end result being, the GIs on the ground treated it like the Wild West with Indians behind

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every bush; their weapons were always at the ready, even when they talked to the natives, which was a very antagonistic stance.

"If anything," the officer continues, "the locals in areas under US control viewed the GIs as imperial occupiers, whereas in other areas, under Dutch or Canadian control, they saw them more as helpers who just happened to be heavily armed. Although the US pumped loads of dosh in, it was at the top end, and the native in his bombed-out shack saw his local GIs only as they roared past in their four-vehicle convoys. I'll let you decide what that says about winning hearts and minds, and the state of training. Maybe you can smart-bomb someone out of a job. But technology and force only go so far in introducing ideas and keeping order."

But then, in the US military of today, the human factor seems subordinated to the technological. In early 2002 *Military Review*, an official publication of the Army's Command and General Staff College, published an article critical of the mountain-warfare training program, and noted in some detail the "dos and don'ts" of high-altitude warfare. In last March's Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, it seemed as if the Army had embraced the article's don'ts, sending ill-equipped, improperly trained troops up a mountain where, far from choking the enemy into submission, the Taliban/Al Qaeda were able to reinforce and subsequently disappear.

As the military spends money to make its systems more technology-dependent, the rest of the world will find low-tech ways to get around them.

In theory, Anaconda was supposed to be something of a showcase not only for the regular infantry but for the miracle of modern technology as applied to combat, with an array of sensitive surveillance platforms to pinpoint the enemy and then precision-bomb him out into the open, if not out of existence. However, a recent study by the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute discovered that more than half of enemy positions went undetected by the high-tech eyes in the sky. How could this happen? "The earth's surface remains an extremely complex environment with an abundance of natural and man-made cover and concealment" that—surprise!—can escape or counter all manner of high-tech detection.

As for precision-guided munitions (PGMs), the report notes that even after enemy positions were visually discovered, the "wonder weapons" used were far from magic bullets. "Where the Taliban presented exposed or massed targets in the open, PGMs were extremely lethal," the study says. "Where fighting positions were properly prepared, however, they were much harder to destroy—even with modern PGMs." In fact, "al Qaeda positions survived repeated aerial attack by US PGMs," including one position that fought for a week despite five direct hits from aerial PGMs.

For a military that, in the context of Iraq and beyond, is likely to face urban warfare and subsequent low-intensity conflict in cities and mountains sans adequate training, wonder weapons and networked surveillance/communications systems may not only be lacking; they could even be exploitable weaknesses. In his recent *Parameters* essay "Doomed to Fail: America's Blind Faith in Military Technology," John Gentry, a retired Special Forces officer and veteran of East Asian and Bosnian operations, draws attention to the recent Defense Department planning document *Joint Vision 2020*.

JV 2020, Gentry reports, champions more technology for future military operations and is "a virtual article of faith in DOD." In Gentry's view, it's the epitome of "simple arrogance," as its inspiration is Operation Desert Storm—a military abnormality, something that really shouldn't be the basis for doctrine, as it pitted "an inept, demoralized Iraqi army" against US troops who were allowed to "assemble forces unmolested for six months, then allowed to attack on their schedule" in a clear, flat desert environment "well suited to use of precision munitions."

While the gee-whiz stuff works great in optimal conditions against a ham-fisted opponent, Gentry notes that "technology contributes virtually nothing to complex civil-military operations, like recent ones in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, in which the US military has not performed particularly well." Technology, he observes, "has little applicability to political and many military situations for elementary reasons," as "sensors cannot identify human motives, measure human emotions, quantify the coherence of human organizations, or assess the importance of the data they gather." For existing sensors to have any worth, actual troops, he continues, "must acquire adequate background knowledge and understanding of their areas of responsibility before they deploy in order to be able to convert the incremental bits that their sensors give them into useful information."

Alas, he continues, "US troops rarely make such preparations.... While surely the United States can put munitions on any place on the planet through sheer mass of resources, there is no corresponding superiority of individual troops or units—and, more important, no superiority of operational result." The results range from the "Black Hawk Down" (Somalia, 1993) and Anaconda scenarios on the micro level to Kosovo on a macro level—situations that either end badly, or with an illusion of triumph (while the 1999 NATO bombing campaign worked as an exercise in coercive diplomacy, the Serbian Army's use of decoys and natural cloud cover, coupled with the lack of maneuver-oriented NATO ground troops to engage the Serbs and protect the Kosovars, negated the operation's value as a military success).

Noting the current Administration's "pursuit of dominance," now "widely called American 'hegemony' [that] is widely resented," Gentry points out that as the US military continues to spend money to make its systems and weapons more technology-dependent, the rest of the world will probably find cheap, low-tech ways to get inside this technologically driven decision cycle. This means that "opponents can take deception actions that lead US forces to waste scarce precision munitions on low-value targets," he writes. And the rest of the world knows that isn't hard to do, as "America's dearth of collective patience and self-discipline is legendary."

If the military continues on this techno-driven track, Gentry's view—echoed by a number of officers interviewed for this article—is that the odds get higher of accelerating "a spiral that threatens to become increasingly expensive, both financially and politically." The success of the technocentric "Revolution in Mili-

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tary Affairs" can, Gentry holds, actually "create new categories of weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Enhanced connectivity already increases the generals' ability to micro-manage tactical operations from afar...to the detriment of initiative, operational performance, and the morale and retention of junior officers." In the end, Gentry writes, it all boils down to the fact that the Defense Department's "basic problem is leadership," and Donald Rumsfeld's vaunted "transformation" program "barely addresses the fundamental institutional problems and pushes the department to use yet more gadgetry."

According to former OSCE Bosnia chief Barry, while the right sees post-Saddam Iraq under US military governorship as akin to post–World War II Japan or Germany, it's more likely to resemble the former Yugoslavia—where, after more than six years and $100 billion, peace and prosperity are far from secured. It's troubling, he writes, that "there is little sign that serious preparations are under way" for Iraq's future. That the Defense Department has a "distaste for nation-building" and that "the one thing all Iraqi exile groups oppose is a US military government" should also be the stuff of consideration. But at a time when even the objections of historical US allies are seen as intransigent betrayal, don't count on it, as Uncle Sam clearly knows best. ■

Letter to America

PAR AVION luftpost CORREO AEREO

by Ramesh Thakur

In order to provide international perspective in the debate over US foreign policy, The Nation *asked foreign intellectuals to share their reflections. This is the sixth in that series. —The Editors*

The tragedy of 9/11 inflicted on the American body politic a pain that will not ease and aroused an anger not easily appeased. The world grieved with America, understood its pain, shared its anger and generally supported the ensuing "war on terrorism." The sympathy and goodwill is in danger of being dissipated. Outsiders had hoped that the tragedy of 9/11 would lead America to rediscover the virtues of multilateralism. The opposite happened instead: Washington felt liberated from the need to make any concessions to multilateralism.

This produced a mini-crisis last July with regard to the International Criminal Court. The tension and contradiction between unilateralism and multilateralism have come to a head again over Iraq. The Bush address to the General Assembly in September was less an American concession to UN multilateralism than a demand for international capitulation in the face of the US threat to go to war.

This is justified by the charge of Iraq's pursuit of nuclear weapons. How do we justify the paradox of the state with the most powerful arsenal of one type of WMD (nuclear weapons) threatening to use force to stop others from acquiring any one of the three types of WMD?

In addition, Washington is refining the critical roles that nuclear weapons play in its military doctrines and strategies. Under the proposed new targeting system of "adaptive planning" based on "offensive deterrence," it proclaimed the option of launching a pre-emptive strike in future contingencies with precision-guided conventional bombs or "special purpose" nuclear weapons against hostile countries that pose a threat, either imminent or apprehended, of a WMD attack on the United States. Nuclear weapons are thus stealthily advancing up the ladder of escalation from the weapon of last resort to a weapon of choice, matching the shift from wars of self-defense to wars of choice.

But can the threshold of nuclear weapons use be lowered without thereby also lowering the threshold of proliferation? Does contemplating and preparing for the use of nuclear weapons with lower yield and reduced fallout against an anticipated WMD threat constitute a preparatory step too far? Mission creep for such weapons—extending their role from deterrence solely against nuclear weapons to countering all WMD—has two consequences: It lumps together biological, chemical and nuclear weapons in one conceptually fuzzy category, and it weakens the nuclear taboo. Why should Iran, which has suffered from missile-launched chemical attacks, not have the same right to nuclear defense?

Moreover, the proclamation of an essentially imperial doctrine of unchallengeable military supremacy and "full-spectrum dominance" will greatly magnify the allure of nuclear weapons as weapons of defense-cum-deterrence for poor/weak countries. Accepting the permanent dominance of any one group is contrary to human nature. The combination of US high-tech superiority, reliance on long-distance, over-the-horizon warfare and casualty aversion adds value to nuclear weapons as leveraging tools that can affect the calculus of US military decisions. No one is likely to challenge Washington as such in the foreseeable future, but some will want to acquire the means to make the United States pause before attacking them, and there is no better means to do this than deliverable nuclear weapons.

It defies history, common sense and logic to believe that a group of countries can keep a permanent monopoly on any class of weaponry. It is difficult to convince others of the futility of nuclear weapons when some demonstrate their utility by the very fact of possession and doctrines of usability. If the United States, whose military expenditures will equal those of all other countries in the world combined after the increases recently announced have taken effect, can make a persuasive case to retain nuclear weapons, then such an argument should be even easier for those countries that live in insecure neighborhoods and lack the panoply of conventional military tools.

Ramesh Thakur is vice rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo. These are his personal views.

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The UN, not very good at fighting wars, has been especially good at an unremitting effort to find political, economic, legal and institutional alternatives to military force. The strategic logic underpinning multilateral institutions is of a world united in action on the road to a common destiny. The pursuit of multilateral agreements is based on a careful judgment that such agreements contribute to separate national interests.

In-your-face rejection of these agreements, rooted in America's self-conception as a virtuous power that should not be bound to rules that apply to everyone else, is damaging to long-term US interests. Do American policy-makers really believe they can construct a world in which all others have to obey universal norms and rules but Washington can opt out whenever it likes from whatever it dislikes? Alternatively, do they really believe that a world in which every country retreated into unilateralism would be a better guarantee of US national security than multilateral accords?

The UN is the main embodiment of the principle of multilateralism and the principal vehicle for the pursuit of multilateral goals. It is the symbol of our hopes and dreams for a better world, where weakness can be compensated for by justice and fairness, and the law of the jungle is replaced by the rule of law. The UN lies at the center of contemporary institutions of global governance. Even the "war on terrorism" requires international cooperation among law enforcement, drug enforcement, border control and financial regulatory authorities. Such cooperation is greatly facilitated by international agreements, rules and regimes.

After World War II, the United States was the chief architect of the normative structure of world order based on the international rule of law. There was, alongside this, deep and widespread confidence in the United States as a fundamentally trustworthy, balanced and responsible custodian of world order, despite occasional lapses or eccentricities. In the past couple of years, the United States has engaged in a systematic belittling and hollowing out of a whole series of arms control and disarmament agreements, and of efforts at ushering in new ones. Arguably, it has also been engaged in a similar frontal assault on the principle of global norms—from arms control, climate change and international criminal justice to conventions against torture and for the rights of children and planned parenthood; and on the very concept of an international community. How, then, can it be the chief enforcer of global norms on behalf of the international community?

In sum, Washington seriously underestimates how its own policies and actions contribute to a worsening of the proliferation challenge. The world has signed on to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty; Washington exempts itself from NPT clauses requiring nuclear disarmament. Small states put their faith in the protection of international law; Washington disdainfully dismisses international law as a minor inconvenience, not a bar to any action being contemplated. Small states pin their hopes for security from predatory powers on a functioning UN system; the United States declares the UN to be irrelevant unless supportive of what Washington desires. Small states have supported disarmament for a world that was progressively delegitimizing the unilateral use of force to settle international disputes; what are they to make of threats of unilateral pre-emptive strikes? As Washington throws off fetters on the unilateral use of force and the universal taboo on nuclear weapons, it simultaneously increases the attraction of nuclear weapons for others—like North Korea—and diminishes the force of global norms and regimes in restraining such countries' nuclear ambitions.

There will indeed be occasions and opponents where diplomacy must be backed by the credible threat of force, but war for the wrong reasons will delegitimize the instrument itself. The key to getting the use of force right lies in due process (collective decision-making), due authority (the United Nations) and due diligence (just-war principles). For then force will indeed be put to the service of law. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

nois, and Amarillo, Texas, to make more voters feel their vote is worth something, to crack the two-party duopoly, and to protect and expand fair representation for minorities. More progressive policy will result when our democracy is more representative, and less the stunted eighteenth-century relic of today.

STEVEN HILL
Center for Voting and Democracy

GREEN REPLIES

New York City

■ As Jeff Faux notes, it's very difficult to get a body of incumbents to change the rules that got them there. But it can happen if (a) a Watergate/Enron–like scandal makes them fear voters more than their donors, or (b) a sympathetic President during his "honeymoon" insists on it. Indeed, Congress did pass a good public-financing bill in 1992—which President Bush Senior vetoed—and would have again if President Clinton hadn't allowed Speaker Foley to dissuade him in 1993 from making a major effort.

A national drive for a constitutional amendment is a huge, expensive yet conceivable undertaking, which I agree should be attempted—after the 2004 elections. For there actually is a prospect that a pro-reform Democrat could win the nomination and presidency (e.g., Senator Kerry was the author of the best public-financing bill in the Senate a decade ago) and then insist early on a strong law, just as the current Bush interpreted his "victory" as a mandate for significant tax cuts.

While I don't doubt the influence of gerrymandering, it's simultaneously true that today's give-to-get, pro-incumbency money system prices out much talent from running in the first instance and forces all candidates to the same special-interest money trough, inhibiting the public conversation and tilting public votes on issues of interest to big donors. And, of course, gerrymandering doesn't apply to mayoral, senatorial or presidential campaigns.

Finally, I respectfully suggest that Steven Hill someday seek high office and be outspent 5-to-1 before he so confidently concludes that money doesn't matter.

MARK GREEN
President, New Democracy Project

CORRECTIONS

■ In Jennifer Baumgardner's "*Roe* in Rough Waters" [Feb. 10], the number of women who died annually from illegal abortions before passage of *Roe v. Wade* was not 10,000. Experts put the figure between 1,000 and 5,000 for the postwar period.

In Eric Alterman's "USA Oui! Bush Non!" [Feb 10], Alessandro Portelli is the correct name of the professor of American literature at the University of Rome. Jürgen Habermas is, of course, a philosopher of the Frankfurt School (as Alterman originally wrote), who is also affiliated with Frankfurt University.

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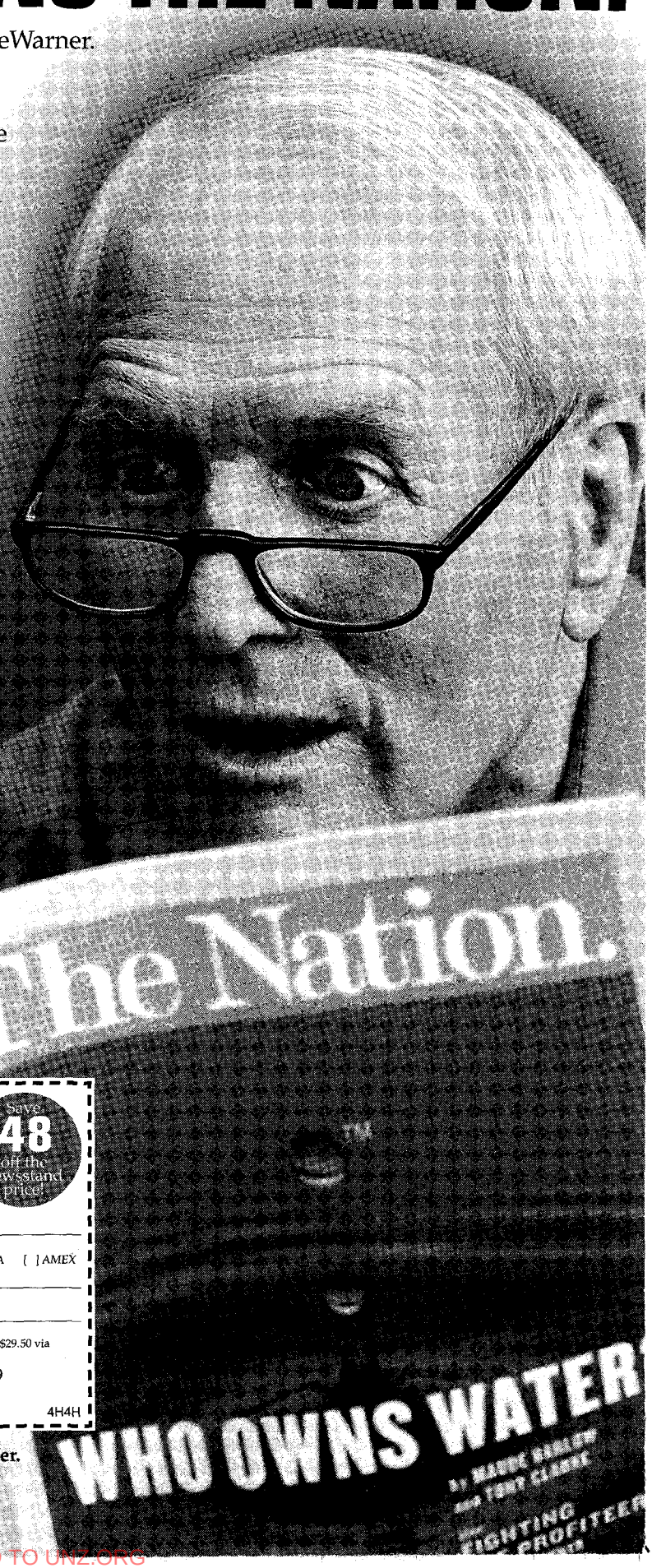

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Who's in Charge?

DAVID CORN

THE RIGHT MAN: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush.
By David Frum. Random House.
303 pp. $25.95.

BUSH AT WAR.
By Bob Woodward.
Simon & Schuster. 376 pp. $28.

On October 4, 2001—less than a month after that horrific day—George W. Bush and the members of his National Security Council were nailing down the details of the coming war in Afghanistan. Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported that search-and-rescue teams, which would be used to locate and extract any downed US pilots, were to be up and running in Uzbekistan in days. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice discussed the need to get other countries to contribute funds for rebuilding Afghanistan. Then Bush inquired, "Who will run the country?" Darn, Rice said to herself, her boss had raised a crucial matter she and the others hadn't yet considered. Bush, it seemed, was looking around the corner—further than his advisers.

This vignette—brought to us by Bob Woodward, scribe to the stars (of Washington)—is one of many in his *Bush at War* showing that, whaddayaknow, the Commander in Chief is actually in command. Bush a dunderhead who has to depend upon the intelligence of others? Bush a puppet maneuvered and manipulated by Cheney, Rove, Rumsfeld and Rice? Sorry, all you lefties and Democratic partisans who hold fast to Bush-is-a-ninny biases. Woodward's latest history-before-it's-history, and another book by ex–Bush speechwriter David Frum, *The Right Man*, a tales-out-of-school memoir, cast Bush as the go-to guy of this Administration. It is *his* White House, *his* presidency and *his* war. Each of these two very different insiders offers a strong case that the country is indeed being led by Bush, not by committee or cabal. Scary, isn't it?

David Corn is The Nation*'s Washington editor.*

Woodward zeros in on the weeks following 9/11 and Bush's step-by-step construction of the war in Afghanistan. His book is, he claims, "largely the story as the insiders saw it, heard it and lived it." That is, Woodward stuck with what has become in recent years his standard MO: Approach each power player and say, "All the other power players are telling me their side of the story, so you should do so as well." Woodward then weaves the various self-serving versions—supplied, of course, on background—into a quasi-official chronicle, with little overt sourcing. He did interview Bush on the record at The Ranch, and when his narrative has Rice thinking a particular thought, it takes little guesswork to suss out who enabled Woodward to be a mind reader. This courtside journalism is a far cry from what placed Woodward on the path to fame. Three decades ago, he and Carl Bernstein, the crusading, superhero reporters of Watergate, excavated a story the big shots didn't want public. Now, he tells us (more so than less) what the powerful do want known.

A Bush maneuvered and manipulated by Rove, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice? Not according to this courtside journalism.

This in-house form of journalism does have entertainment and enlightenment value. There's good, high-end gossip. Donald Rumsfeld thought Bush *père* "was a weak CIA director who seriously underestimated the Soviet Union's military advances and was manipulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger." Colin Powell and George W. had an awkward, no-connection relationship. Army Gen. Hugh Shelton and Rummy were bitterly at odds. Dirt on Cheney? The Veep is not as big a presence in the book as a reader might have expected. (Did he not give Woodward sufficient time?) Overall, though, Woodward is too kind to his sources. He downplays CIA lapses pre-9/11 as he sympathetically depicts CIA chief George Tenet. He raises the issue of whether the Bushies paid enough attention to terrorism and Al Qaeda before

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the attacks—but does not vigorously pursue the matter. And Top Gun comes out as a strong figure, emotional when the moment dictates, heroic and stoic when necessary. Bush is a man transformed. Woodward, an assistant managing editor of the *Washington Post*, ends up devoting less attention to Bush's faults and missteps than does Frum, a neocon intellectual/writer who worked for Bush.

On 9/11, without consulting Cheney, Powell or Rumsfeld, Bush proclaimed, "We will make no distinction between those who planned these acts and those who harbor them." Using the word "harbor" was the President's idea, Woodward reports. Thus, the Bush Doctrine was conceived mostly by Bush himself. "The president, Rice, [Karen] Hughes, and the speechwriters," Woodward notes, "had made one of the most significant foreign policy decisions in years, and the secretary of state had not been involved." (Frum has a slightly different take. Read on.) When it came time to slap together a war cabinet, Cheney suggested that someone should chair a group that would develop options and report to Bush. No way, Bush countered. As Woodward puts it, "Bush said, I'm going to do that, run the meetings. This was a commander in chief function—it could not be delegated. He also wanted to send the signal that it was he who was calling the shots, that he had the team in harness."

Woodward, working in part off notes taken by the principals (where's the White House call for plugging these leaks?), covers meetings where Bush was in the driver's seat, defining the mission and cracking the whip. In the early sessions, Rumsfeld kept pressing for expanding the war beyond Al Qaeda—meaning, Iraq. Bush said his instinct was first things first—start with Osama bin Laden. Even though he disagreed with Rumsfeld on heading straight toward Baghdad, Bush from the get-go did display a unilateralist impulse. When Powell argued that an Al Qaeda–plus strategy would fracture the international coalition he was assembling, Bush said he wouldn't stand for other countries dictating the terms or conditions of the war on terrorism: "At some point we may be the only ones left. That's okay with me. We are America." No surprise there.

When Tenet proposed a broad program of covert action—including assassination—against Al Qaeda, Rumsfeld was gung-ho but thought Tenet's proposal was written too broadly. Bush rejected Rumsfeld's attempt to scale it back. After it was decided the State Department would issue an ultimatum to the Taliban—give up bin Laden or else—Bush concluded it made more sense for him to make the threat.

In scene after scene, Bush establishes control. While he was prepping for a September 20 address before Congress, Rumsfeld urged him to raise the possibility that weapons of mass destruction might be used against the United States. "It's an energizer for the American people," he argued. (It also was a reason to place Iraq on the immediate target list.) Bush said no. He feared that such a reference would end up dominating his entire speech. "We have to be patient about Iraq," he said. (Bush was hardly soft on Saddam. He told his crew, "I believe Iraq was involved [in the 9/11 attacks], but I'm not going to strike them now. I don't have the evidence at this point.") In another decisive step, Bush told his National Security Council comrades, "We'll just have to put some of the most sensitive stuff not on paper." And before the NSC principals had turned to the issue, Bush was pressing for a humanitarian aid drop in Afghanistan. "Can we have the first bombs we drop be food?" he asked. As Kabul fell—almost unexpectedly to the Bush crowd, which had been keeping some of the less encouraging military reports from the public—Bush was focusing on a fertilizer plant that might be a weapons lab and issuing orders to inspect every SUV in the northeast.

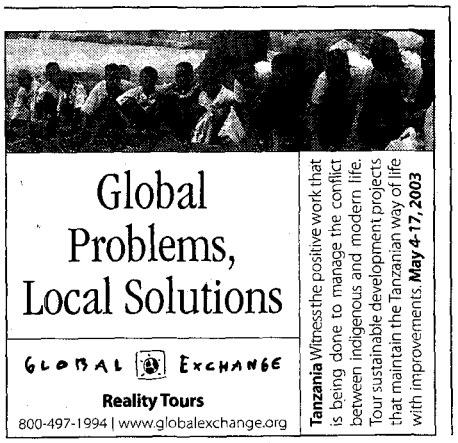
In Woodward's telling, the members of Bush's posse were deferential to him. They looked to him to lead—them and the country. They might not always agree with his decision, but they respected it. A running subplot is Powell's occasional discomfort with Bush and the others. Powell, according to Woodward, "believed" the President made harsh, we'll-do-it-ourselves statements, "knowing they might not withstand a second analysis. Tough talk might be necessary, but it shouldn't be confused with policy." Wishful thinking? Cheney, though, "took Bush at his word. He was convinced the president was serious when he said the United States would go it alone." (Powell has since come around. With his recent presentation to the United Nations, he signaled war was the only option, with or without the UN. Poof! One of Washington's favorite dramas—Powell and the striped-pants set versus Rumsfeld and his warriors in suits—was gone.)

Is this a believable portrait of Bush? Political handlers always endeavor to show their client as the conductor swinging the baton. That may well be true in this case. But Bush's leadership is not the only point worthy of consideration. What does it say of Bush that he was predisposed to believe—without evidence—that Saddam was a 9/11 mastermind? Woodward, embracing access over analysis, doesn't explore such terrain. He engages in minimal evaluation of what he reports. But his on-the-surface account prompts important questions. "Bush's leadership style," he writes,

> bordered on the hurried. He wanted action, solutions. Once on a course, he directed his energy at forging on, rarely looking back, scoffing at—even ridiculing—doubt and anything less than 100 percent commitment. He seemed to harbor few, if any, regrets. His short declarations could seem impulsive.

What might it mean for a nation to be guided into war by such a fella? Woodward leaves that to you to decide. He shows that Bush and his colleagues agreed on a go-get-'em strategy without looking too far down the road to imagine what might be wrought by their actions. Striking back at Al Qaeda and the Taliban was justified. But it would be reassuring to see Bush and the others pondering possible consequences (good and bad).

Are there clues in Woodward's book as to what will happen next (as if we need any)? He observes that "the president and his team had found that protecting and sealing the U.S. homeland was basically impossible." Consequently, "Bush believed a preemption strategy might be the only alternative if he were serious about not waiting for events." Bush at war is clearly not a person burdened by nuance. ("Either you believe in freedom, and want to—and worry about the human condition, or you don't," he tells Woodward.) To pre-empt or not to pre-empt is not a question for Bush. If you have to ask it, you already have your answer. His view is that of a sheriff who feels obligated to prevent all possible threats from reaching his town. That urge just so happens to jibe nicely with the desires of the geostrategists—Rumsfeld, Cheney, Rice and various outside-the-government neocon crusaders led by Bill Kristol—who see an Iraq invasion as part of an overall campaign to project American influence and power into the Middle East either for mes-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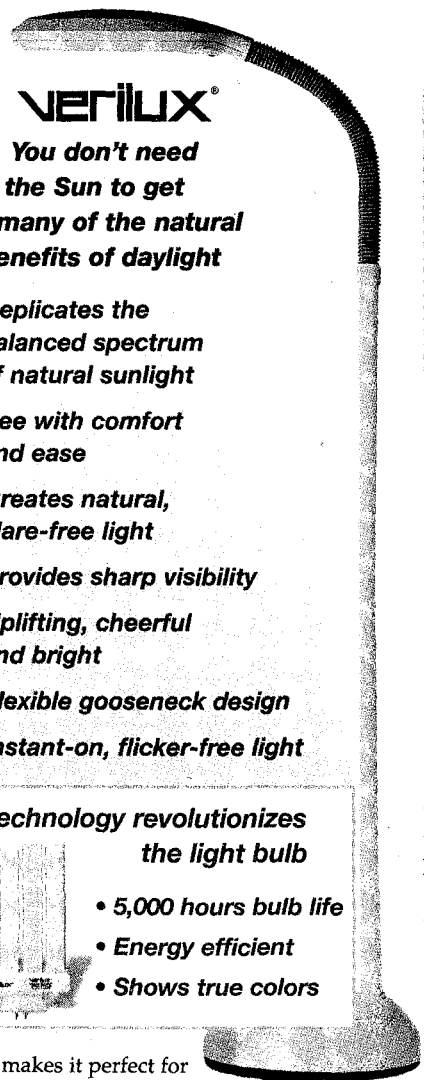

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sianic purposes (spreading democracy) or reasons of security (neutralizing a supposed regional threat), or both. In his recent State of the Union speech, Bush implicitly conceded that Saddam does not pose an immediate danger when he said, "If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions...would come too late." Yet, from where he sits, the absence of a discernible imminent threat is no reason not to go to war. A *conceivable* threat is sufficient.

And he is the one who has to make the call. In his interview with Woodward, Bush, perhaps summing up the lesson he learned from his first serious foray into foreign policy (the campaign in Afghanistan), says that UN and international coalitions might not be the best way to deal with rogue states. "Confident action," he remarked, would create "kind of a slipstream into which reluctant nations and leaders can get behind." In other words, if I go to war, others will follow (rather than howl). "His vision," Woodward writes, "clearly includes an ambitious reordering of the world through preemptive, and, if necessary, unilateral action to reduce suffering and bring peace." The White House can't be too upset with such a cursory conclusion.

Frum, too, serves up Bush the Visionary. You might recall Frum's brush with Washington fame. A onetime writer for the right-wing *Weekly Standard*, he had favored John McCain over Bush in the primaries but joined Bush's White House speechwriting team several weeks into the Administration. After the 2002 State of the Union address, Frum's wife zapped out an e-mail to friends crediting him with penning the "axis of evil" line, which was the highlight—or lowlight—of the speech. Whoops. Protocol calls for speechwriters to be humble. Only the Big Man deserves the spotlight or the microphone. (Actually, Frum had suggested the phrase "axis of hate," and chief speechwriter Michael Gerson had transformed the epithet into something a bit more religiously cast.) A month later, Frum left the White House. In *The Right Man*, he explains—or claims—he had submitted his resignation before the State of the Union speech and had not been booted. But his departure was widely perceived as a warning: Don't cross *el jefe*.

So no hard feelings? Frum has opportunistically capitalized on his White House days by writing about his service to Bush in a fashion that should please and occasionally aggravate his former comrades. Like Woodward, he places Bush firmly at the helm, steering the ship of state and following a course of his own determination. But he takes a few swings at his former boss. Overall, it's a net win for the Bushies, though I imagine many of them wish Frum had kept his laptop shut.

Frum is, to an extent, an insightful observer, and the book is written in a sprightly fashion. He does, though, share the biases of his conservative claque. While he argues that the Clintons were "morally slack" (no argument there), he sees Bush as a beacon of probity. The evidence? He "scorned the petty untruths of the politician." (I suppose Bush's dishonest statements about his Enron contacts, his tax cuts, his Social Security and Medicare proposals, and his pledge to be a *Uniter Not a Divider* do not qualify as "petty.") Frum claims Bush tried to be nonpartisan, tried to compromise, tried to be civil, but those mean Democrats—nasty Tom Daschle, in particular—rejected his overture. Look, Bush even placed a Democrat in his Cabinet. (Fact-checker query to Frum: Didn't Clinton do the same by appointing Republican William Cohen as Defense Secretary?) And, Frum maintains, the real point of the Kyoto global warming accords and the International Criminal Court treaty—both of which Bush refused to sign on to—was to restrain American power.

Frum hails the Bush White House for being marked by "moral fervor." Bushies do not curse. They always stand when the President enters the room. The first words he heard at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue were "Missed you at Bible study." Bush people were "determined to keep our White House clean, both literally and metaphorically." (Secret meetings with corporate lobbyists and contributors regarding an energy plan? Nothing unclean about that.) But not everything in Bushland impressed Frum. He found "a dearth of really high-powered brains" on the White House staff. (What does that say about Bush? Frum doesn't speculate.) And Bush, Frum reveals, was not always so swell: "Bush's fiercest critics paid tribute to his likeability, but in private, Bush was not the easy, genial man he was in public. Close up, one saw a man keeping a tight grip on himself." Frum quotes a prep-school classmate of Bush: "George is smart: not the smartest guy I've ever met, but smart. But as a boy, he always used his intelligence to hide his intelligence. And he's still doing it."

Frum is especially ungenerous toward Karen Hughes, the television reporter who years ago became Bush's number-one spinner: She "rarely read books and distrusted people who did—anything she did not already know she saw no point in knowing." She was obsessed with increasing Bush's appeal through the use of simple stories that address big themes and that would resonate with the American public overall: "children, health, jobs, faith, patriotism." After watching Bush and Hughes interact, Frum felt compelled to ask several colleagues if the two ever had an affair. All were "astonished by the idea." Searching for a deeper understanding of the intercourse between Bush and Hughes, Frum places W. on the couch: "When he ran for governor, he recruited Hughes—a woman very *like* his mother (she even looks much as Barbara Bush did in her mid-40s), but who offered him the unqualified admiration his mother never did. His wife was his mother antidote. His aide was his mother substitute." Meow! There is something to be said for hiring only loyalists. They rarely resign and go on to diss your mom. Frum also takes a whack at chief political wizard Karl Rove, noting that he was excessively consumed with patching together a winning coalition. Rove's desire to bag New Mexico's five electoral votes, Frum reports, drove the White House to commit an early PR blunder by deep-sixing a stricter regulation from the Environmental Protection Agency on arsenic in drinking water. (The regulation was projected to cause a hike in water costs in the Southwest.)

Sure, Bush needed both Rove and Hughes, but he was the man pulling the levers behind the curtain. He fiercely edited his speeches, once slashing up a draft and handing it back to Frum with the explanation, "The headline is: BUSH LEADS." He made the ultimate decisions on the energy plan—not Cheney—after Cheney and Hughes slugged it out over conservation and alternative energy. (Guess who wanted less emphasis on these topics?) Once Frum suggested "to Bush that he use the phrase *cheap energy* to describe the aims of his energy policy." Bush shot back: From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, American cars became more fuel-efficient, then in 1995 progress stopped with the rise of the gas-guzzling SUV. And what do you think, Bush asked, fueled the SUV craze? "Cheap energy?" Frum replied sheepishly, and left.

"Bush was not a lightweight," Frum

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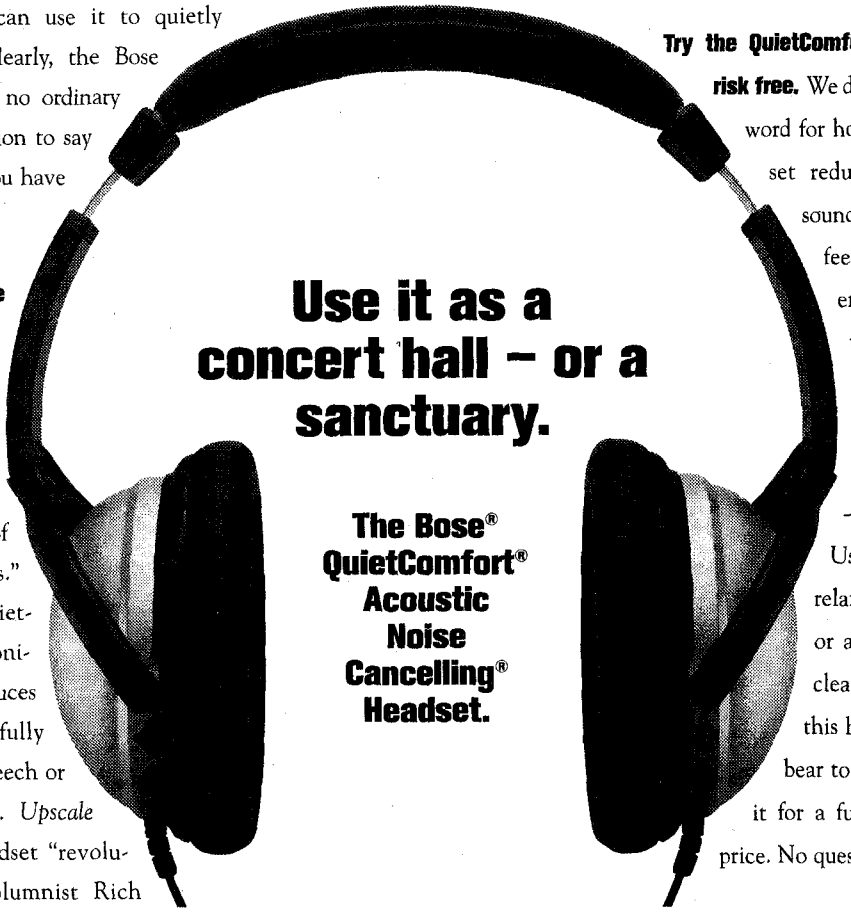

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writes. "He was, rather, a very unfamiliar type of heavyweight. Words often failed him, his memory sometimes betrayed him, but his vision was large and clear. And when he perceived new possibilities, he had the courage to act on them." Still, Frum acknowledges that come the summer of 2001, Bush's vision wasn't helping him much. He had scored his big tax cut that favored the wealthy. (Always call it "tax relief," Hughes demanded.) But after Senator Jim Jeffords left the GOP and handed control of the Senate to the Democrats, the Bush yacht seemed to be floundering. Gas prices were on the rise, the economy was sluggish. His faith-based initiative was sinking. He had employed an old Washington dodge and passed Social Security reform to a commission. The energy plan was out of steam. Frum was even avoiding parties, in order to evade antagonistic questions from his conservative pals. One bright moment for Frum was Bush's decision on stem-cell research. Before releasing his policy, Frum recalls, "he did something I had never seen him do: He brooded." But Bush tried to have it both ways on stem cells, by allowing some limited research to continue while preventing the development of new stem-cell lines to widen the research possibilities. Frum considered this a majestic, Solomon-like resolution. But to this ideological wrestler from Canada—who in years past had decried the American conservative movement for going soft—the future looked bleak. The White House was considering unveiling proposals to encourage e-mail between children and their grandparents, and to promote positive stories in newspapers.

Then came 9/11, and the vision man was back. Maybe not that first day. Frum recalls that he and his fellow speechwriters were dismayed by the speech Bush delivered that night from the Oval Office. (Hughes had chucked the speech written by the team and drafted her own.) The problem was that Bush "referred in passing to a 'war on terrorism,'" but "he offered no explanation of the attack and promised no retaliation." Worse, for Frum, Bush "offered instead a doughy pudding of stale metaphors." For instance: "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining." It was not, alas, "a war speech." It did, though, contain the line about making "no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." And Frum cannot resist informing us he had been the one to insert that thought into every draft of the speech.

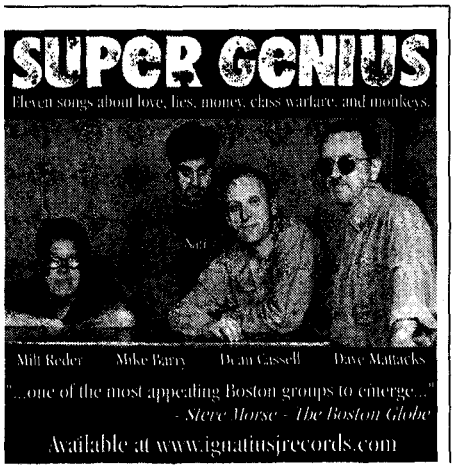
As speechwriters do, Frum focuses on Bush's rhetorical replies to the attacks. And he argues Bush did get his mojo working after the "Awful Office Address," and the nation was able to see "a new Bush." It appeared when Bush spoke at a National Cathedral memorial ceremony ("This conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing") and when he delivered an address to Congress in September ("Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists"). But words had to be coupled with action, and, Frum notes, within the White House, "opinion divided between those who wanted to fight the smallest possible war and those who wanted to win the biggest possible victory." In other words, blast Iraq or not.

Frum, a hawkish Sharonista, favored the big-victory school, though such decisions were above his pay grade. (Powell and Rummy were battling it out, with Rice drifting toward the Defense Secretary.) Then Frum got his chance. The junior speechwriter was asked to draft a memo for a speech that would explain why Saddam had to go. He ruminated and concluded that "terror states and terror organizations formed an axis of hatred against the United States," and the "United States could not wait for these dangerous regimes to get deadly weapons and attack us; the United States must strike first and protect the world from them." Thus, in his first State of the Union speech, Bush wagged his finger at the Axis of Evil. There is something disturbing in the notion that the axis-of-whatever formulation was hatched by speechwriters, not policy folks. Frum's axis was more a rhetorical device than an actual organization. Still, he reassures the reader, Bush "understood all its implications. He backed them with all the power of his presidency." He graciously observes, "Once [Bush] uttered it, 'axis of evil' ceased to be a speechwriter's phrase and became his own, and he defiantly repeated it over and over again."

Frum's phrase struck a chord with Bush because he sees the world in the starkest of terms. Some might call it simplistic and rigid but Frum considers it bold and visionary. It was Bush, not Frum, though, who had to live with—and act upon—the "implications." Did the use of such aggressive language cause North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il to feel directly threatened and behave even more belligerently than he otherwise might have? It's possible. Nevertheless, those words did set Bush on a road toward war. What do you do with an "axis of evil"? Obviously, you have to smash it. And Saddam, you're first. (North Korea? Well, we'll get back to you on that, it's more complicated. In the meantime, Kim, don't take it so damn literally. Iran? Well...) Frum had accomplished an important neocon mission: locking Bush—I mean, helping Bush lock himself—into that course of wider confrontation yearned for by the hawkish geostrategists. Bush's post–Axis of Evil use of severe rhetoric toward Iraq has increasingly left him little wiggle room beyond ordering war.

Stating the obvious, Frum notes that before September 11, Bush "was not on his way to a very successful presidency." He was "in danger of becoming his father: a candidate elected by the dwindling conservative coalition, who generated less and less enthusiasm within that coalition." His "political vision"—while existent—"was unclear." He "lacked a big organizing idea." His "Compassionate Conservatism" was no more than an "agglomeration of little ideas...wrapped together to look like a big idea." After Osama bin Laden attacked, Bush became a "superb" wartime President, Frum proclaims, demonstrating "moderation, persistence, and boldness." Frum asserts that "the record shows"—at least for now!—"that at every turn Bush has behaved with remarkable caution, circumspection, deliberation." He adds, "using only conventional weapons, the armed forces of the United States could have obliterated in any single afternoon after the fall of Kabul not merely Iraqi military power, but Iraq's existence as an organized society. But Bush waited and waited and waited." Let us praise Bush for not raining total destruction upon the men, women and children of Iraq.

Ultimately, Bush is not much of a mystery, in the world according to Woodward and Frum. As Frum advises, read Bush's speeches and statements, and you can usually tell what he intends to do. Forces swirling about Bush within the Administration may deserve analysis and sorting out. But Bush operates at face-value level. Moreover, he is the fellow in the lead chariot. The country—and perhaps the globe—is in his hands, not Rumsfeld's, not Cheney's, not Powell's. Make of that what you will. ■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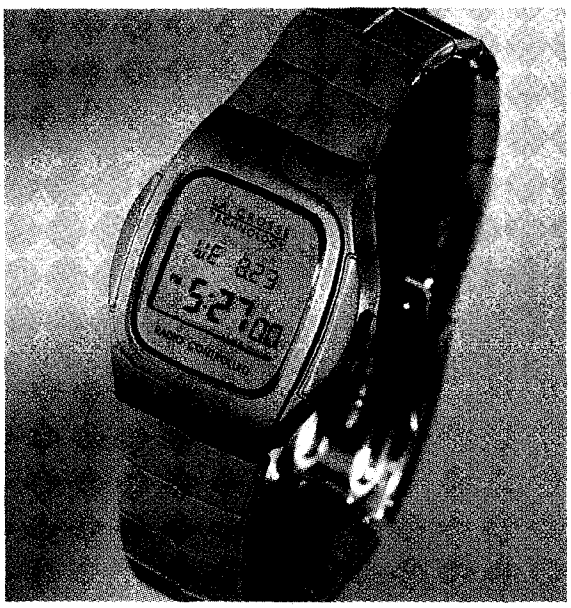

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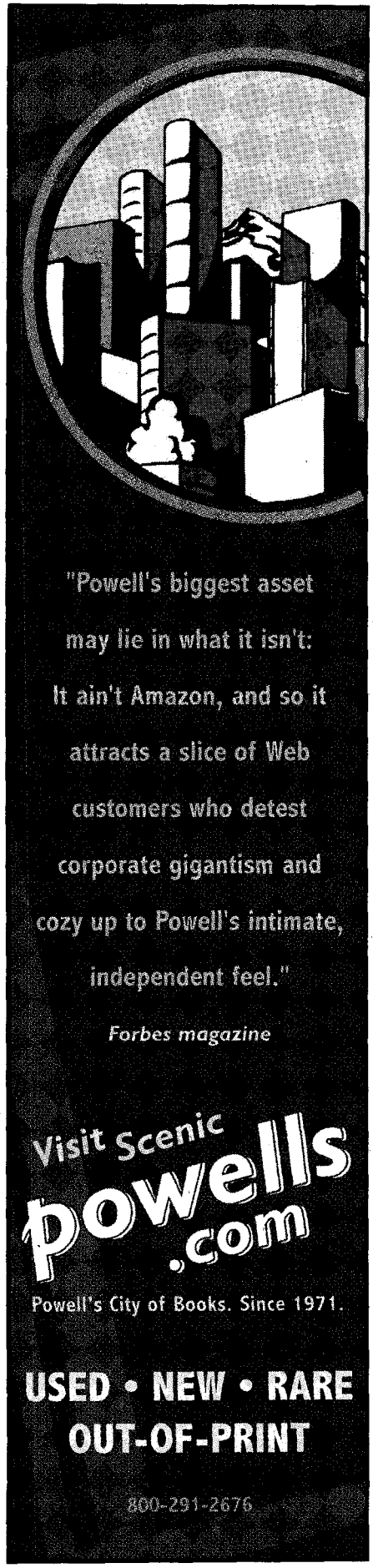

ART

The 'Indivisible Four'

ARTHUR C. DANTO

THE PARK AVENUE CUBISTS

The Grey Art Gallery, which occupies the former site of the Museum of Living Art in the main building of New York University on Washington Square, is celebrating its legendary predecessor with an exhibition of work by the so-called Park Avenue Cubists, who embody the spirit of Modernism for which the earlier museum stood. The very conception of a "museum for living art" must have sounded discordant in 1927, when the institution was founded by Albert Eugene Gallatin, himself one of the "indivisible four" Park Avenue Cubists, as they were called, somewhat resentfully, by fellow members of the American Abstract Artists. There had of course been galleries given over to modern and contemporary art, but the concept of a museum implied that its holdings belonged to the past. Gallatin's collection of "living art" was selected to express the same present to which his museum belonged, and those with an appetite for modernity could for the first time in New York experience the advanced art of their time in a museum setting: Picasso's *Three Musicians*, Mondrian's *Composition in Blue and Yellow*, as well as work by Arp, Léger, Míro, Braque and other Modernists, and ultimately the work of the Park Avenue Cubists themselves. Their paintings were executed to be perceived as living art, and it is that dimension of their self-aware contemporaneity that still conveys a certain excitement. Part of what defines modern art is the fact that it was created for persons who conceived of themselves as modern, the art contributing to that identity through the fact of its difference from the art of the past.

The NYU art historian Robert Rosenblum visited the Gallatin Collection when he was a boy, and I find his recollection particularly affecting. "Here was the future in flat planes and clean colors, with lucid arcs and angles replacing old-fashioned realist imagery, and all laws of gravity repealed in favor of the aerial freedom appropriate to the new century of speed and flight." What is moving about the art of the Park Avenue Cubists is that it belonged to the dark reality of the Depression by expressing the same bright dream of the future that the 1939 New York World's Fair conveyed. The design language of the World's Fair was "modernistic," to use a term of the time; and though there was no gallery of Modernist art in the visionary city erected in Flushing Meadows, the fair's famous emblem—the Trylon and Perisphere—monumentalized forms from the vocabulary of Modernistic painting. The World's Fair complex of buildings and avenues was intended to be the future made present, and its visitors left their bleak world behind when they passed through its gates. It was a future in which everything, even domestic appliances, looked as if it were in a state of infinite velocity. Very little "living art" actually figured in the fair's iconography, though one of its most popular emblems was a sculpture by Joseph Renier called *Speed*, representing a kind of aerodynamic horse with the streamlined look of a Futurist radiator ornament on a colossal scale. The paintings of the Park Avenue Cubists by rights belonged on the walls of the Home of Tomorrow, even if they were still lifes. They embody the fair's optimism, which is why they still manage to lift the spirits, though they belong to what the historian Reinhart Koselleck calls a *vergangene Zukunft*—a future that belongs to the past.

In their own time they were felt to belong to a past that *was* past. Their work was criticized as "derivative." So much of contemporary art since the 1960s has been taken up with the appropriation of past forms that we are far less concerned with repetition than the 1930s or '40s were, when the Park Avenue Cubists had to defend their originality. One of their number, George L.K. Morris, argued wittily enough that it is "as though a Sixteenth Century critic, after examining a fresco of Raphael, could think of nothing to say but that he detected the influence of Perugino." But obviously something more was at issue than influence. Cubism was really more like a language than a style, and from the moment that it began to shard forms into arrangements of "lucid arcs and angles," it became one of the chief dialects of modern art, and it means Modernism whenever one sees it. Even so, it underwent stylistic changes.

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A 1908 review described Braque as having "reduced everything, sites and figures and houses, to geometrical schemata—to cubes." But early Cubist colors were drab and neutral—ochres and grays—by contrast with the pure, slangy colors of Park Avenue Cubism. And its forms look like slabs of clay by contrast with the latter's urbanity, which reflected the svelte architectures of Manhattan. Duchamp got into hot water with his fellow Cubists in 1913 when he tried to depict movement in *Nude Descending a Staircase*, probably because their rivals, the Futurists, made movement and speed the substance of their contribution. But Futurism was in effect Cubism with whiz-lines and nested angles or curves to show "speed and flight." Morris's paintings feel as if he was trying to depict the images left on the retina by the way the eye performs saccades from point to point of the visual field. The wheel segments in his 1935 *New England Church* imply that one is riding past a church that one has to synthesize in order to recover its identity. The rest of the painting shows syncopated glimpses of a church through fragments of its architectural parts, distributed across the canvas. Instead of reconstructing the visual world, as the classical Cubists did, he is trying to show the process through which we construct the world visually and cinematically. His paintings, like those of his wife, Suzy Frelinghuysen, are like colorful diagrams of vigorous eye movements. What could have been more "living"?

In his catalogue essay for the 1939 exhibition of the American Abstract Artists—an organization that he helped found—Morris wrote that "it is on its quality that an abstract work must stand, yet people persist in looking for everything except quality." The paintings on view at the Grey Gallery look better than they could have when they were first shown, just because so much of the ideology that defined the atmosphere of their art world has vanished, and we are able to look at the work without the prejudices that impeded its reception in its own era. Before World War II, for example, it was an a priori attitude that simply by virtue of being American, their painting would have to be inferior. It was widely accepted that European painting in its nature was superior to anything American painters were capable of, almost as if just being an American meant that one was culturally disabled. Alfred Barr, the celebrated director of the Museum of Modern Art, which opened two years after the Museum of Living Art, was candid in saying that he had no interest in American art. The Park Avenue Cubists were disappointed that only one American—Alexander Calder—was included in

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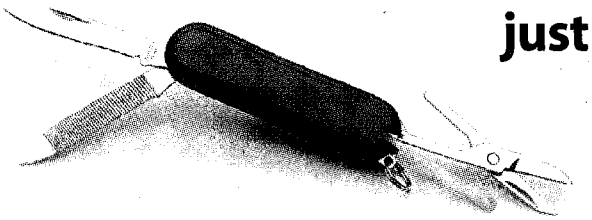

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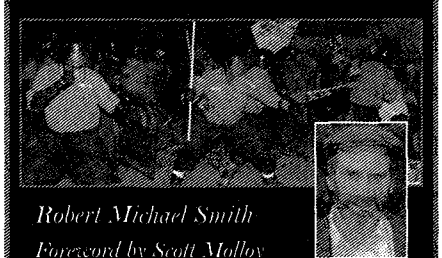

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MoMA's 1936 exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art." The official reason was that it was the responsibility of the Whitney to show American art, but when the Whitney did mount a show of abstract work by Americans in 1935, Morris complained that it was simply halfhearted: The art selected might well have confirmed the prejudice that Americans were just not up to the level of European Modernists. Robert Motherwell was still bitter about this years later. In an interview with Paul Cummings in 1971, he said, "The position in the 1930s and 1940s was that if you were a modern artist and any good, you were by definition a European.... It was like wine. If wine is any good, it's French. Or if cooking is any good, it's French. It's inconceivable that an American can make a masterpiece." Against this wall of Eurocentrism, it meant much to American artists that the Museum of Living Art showed their work alongside the Europeans.

There was, moreover, an overall prejudice against abstract art as such in the thirties. This came from three directions: regionalism, Socialist Realism and the art establishment. The regionalists declared abstraction to be European, and accordingly irrelevant to American life. Artists like Thomas Hart Benton, or Grant Wood, took it as their duty, so to speak, to paint America first. Socialist Realism was the pictorial language of class struggle. Artists should see themselves as "cultural workers," and make art with which working people could identify. They should be represented in overalls and cloth caps, creating surplus value by manipulating heavy machinery or driving tractors. Abstract art, if not unpatriotic, was counterrevolutionary. So the Park Avenue Cubists found themselves the target of artistic imperatives to paint America—since they were Americans—or to join forces with the working class if their art was to have any relevance. Finally, the art establishment itself was hostile to abstraction, which it saw as decorative at its best. Despite being eulogized in her recent obituaries as a staunch supporter of avant-garde art, the newspaper critic Emily Genauer was an unrelenting opponent of abstraction. Writing for *World Telegram*, she dismissed the paintings of Mondrian and Moholy-Nagy as "so many simple commonplace patterns for bathroom tiles."

Against the background of the fierce polemics of 1930s art discourse, one can sense the defiance in the very wording of the title given to the organization the Park Avenue Cubists helped found to promote the art in which they believed—"American Abstract Artists." And one can see why Morris felt it important to distrib-

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ute a questionnaire to those who visited its first exhibition in 1936, to see what "the people" actually thought about abstraction. He took great satisfaction in the results, which showed, in the words he quotes from the *New York Times*, that "in view of the fact that the official spokesmen for art have consistently preached against abstract art as 'un-American' the results of this inquiry show that the American public is far more interested, and would like to see more of it, than any one had hitherto suspected." But *Times* critic Edward Allen Jewell remained unrelentingly hostile to abstraction throughout his tenure.

Beyond that, calling them "Park Avenue Cubists" must have been an expression of *ressentiment*, even among their allies in the American Abstract Artists: It was a way of writing them off because of their wealth and social standing. They all had impressive pedigrees. Gallatin's great-grandfather was the Unites States Treasurer under Jefferson and Madison, as well as an ambassador to France and England—and he founded New York University because, according to the show's curator, Deborah Bricker Balken, he believed Columbia to be too Calvinist. Morris was descended from one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence and was the first art critic for *Partisan Review*, which he supported financially when its editors broke with the John Reed Society and began turning it into America's leading intellectual and literary journal. Frelinghuysen came from a patrician Dutch family in New Jersey—her grandfather had been Secretary of State under Chester Arthur—and she enjoyed successful careers both as an opera singer and a painter. She sang the role of Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* to rave reviews, and was selected by a jury that included Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and André Breton for inclusion in "31 Women" at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery in 1943. Charles Shaw was a socialite and a man about town. Clearly they were a classy bunch. Morris designed a Modernistic house for himself and Frelinghuysen to paint in when they left their penthouse for the summer. They traveled back and forth to Europe, and of course Gallatin collected modern art. Even if it weren't the Depression, their charmed lives made it easy for their work to be dismissed as elitist—still a powerful epithet in critical politics.

These were the things that stood in the way of appreciating the art of the Park Avenue Cubists in their time. Most of the ideology that bedeviled them has lost its power to intimidate. The School of Paris declined precipitously after World War II, so being American stopped being a cultural stigma. New York really did become the capital of world art. Abstraction has become a genre, like portraiture and landscape, as can be seen in the *oeuvre* of Gerhard Richter, and the conflict between it and "the figure" has become irrelevant, since painters of all persuasions have drawn closer to one another under the radical charge that painting as such is dead. Artists in Eastern Europe who were tyrannized by the imperatives of Socialist Realism have all become postmodernists in the 1980s, and have found their way into the international art world. There is always a certain *ressentiment* against privilege, but it is hard to think of a group of artists quite as elite as Gallatin, Morris, Frelinghuysen and Shaw when they were in their prime.

What chiefly stands between us and their work today is something they could not have defended themselves against, since it lay in their actual future, namely the emergence of the New York School, with its daunting artistic achievements. I have the most vivid recollection of seeing an exhibition of abstract painting at the Museum of Modern Art in the 1950s, and wondering why I should take seriously the brightly painted pictures of circles and bars and squiggles when, moving dutifully along the wall of a gallery, I came suddenly upon Jackson Pollock's painting *The She-Wolf* and was knocked off my horse. I saw immediately that abstraction was capable of an undreamt-of greatness that nothing I had ever seen in the exhibitions of American Abstract Artists at the Riverside Museum so much as hinted at. In the light of Rothko, Kline, Newman, de Kooning and Pollock, it would have been easy to concur with the judgment stated by Robert Lubar, one of the authors of the Grey Gallery catalogue, that the Park Avenue Cubists are "little more than a quaint reminder of tentative and failed initiatives in the struggle to transplant the lessons of European modernism to American soil." If there is a criticism to be made of the Park Avenue Cubists, it is that they seemed content, to use Morris's phrases, to work at solidly grounding "the traditions of the future" and "the endless problems of form in design." They lacked the larger visions of their tremendous successors.

Notwithstanding all that, the work today looks marvelous—"delicious" is really the word—when we see it hung together where the masterpieces assembled by Albert Gallatin were once shown, and the show (until March 29) is an absolute treat in these bleak times. This is the first time in more than sixty years that all four artists have been shown just with one another, and I was impressed with the amount of pleasure the work evoked in the dense crowd that showed

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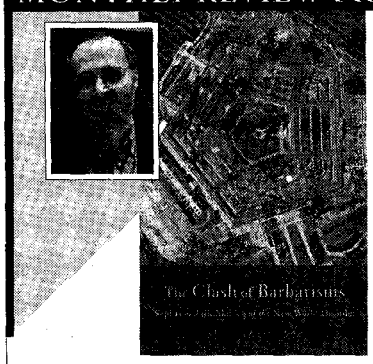

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up at the opening. The jazzy, shaped canvases of Charles Shaw show that Manhattan and Cubism were made for each other. Gallatin, who took up painting at the age of 55, turns out to have been the strongest of the four. But they are all worth thinking about. Now that history has wiped the ideological fingerprints from our glasses, we can enjoy the art as it could never have been before. It restores, to be sure, a piece of American art history. But Gallatin's intention was that the art in his space should be living art—and what Debra Balken and the Grey Art Gallery have done is to bring the art back to life. That should be the goal of all art museums everywhere. ■

DANCE

One Step Removed

DIANE RAFFERTY

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

Those of us who have followed the New York City Ballet and the repertory of the world's greatest choreographer, George Balanchine, since the mid-1950s are filled with spine-tingling memories of great ballets performed by dancers whose technique was so solid they danced beyond technique. A few of many such memories are of Suzanne Farrell dreamily, and seemingly impossibly, floating in way-off-balance arabesques in *Chaconne*; Maria Tallchief touching her knee with her nose in *penché* as the Firebird; Edward Villella, in *Tarantella*, leaping so high and so far while tapping his tambourine (anything held in the hand makes it harder to dance) that the big State Theatre stage could barely contain him; Allegra Kent seductively snaking, then orgasmically yet coolly turning out her gracefully rounded and apparently muscle-less body to wrap around Villella in *Bugaku*, a ballet so erotically charged that someone suggested the police might shut it down. For us, observing the company these days is not without disappointments: The dancing, for the most part, looks fuzzy, messy and safe. (Many City Ballet fans of, say, a dozen years ago are no longer going.) For those very few of us who trained at the School of American Ballet in the 1960s, when it had its most brilliant roster of teachers (mostly Russian), the experience is often downright painful. Except for a handful of dancers, everyone seems to be dancing beyond a lack of technique, or worse, the wrong technique. Conversely, when you see a few dancers executing the choreography cleanly, you are so deeply grateful you want to hug them.

In his choreography, Balanchine was able to enlarge the classical vocabulary of the Imperial Dancing Academy (now the Vaganova) school in St. Petersburg precisely because, as head of the School of American Ballet as well as of the company, he knew that the classic technique was being taught. His company classes were primarily for teaching technique mediated by the demands of the choreography he was working on at the time, and he expected his dancers to take regular school classes to retain classic technique. In a sense, he was teaching his choreography. His deliberate exaggerations of or deviations from the school style, which was the Vaganova style, were all the more visible and thrilling to audiences because his basic medium of expression was classical ballet technique. Now, there's much talk of "Balanchine style," and Suki Schorer, a former member of City Ballet who never went to the School of American Ballet, is a main teacher there and has even written a book, *Suki Schorer on Balanchine Technique*. Schorer is passing on to readers and her students choreography as technique, what she learned in company class with Balanchine. And sadly, the brilliant roster of teachers are all gone except for the 97-year-old Antonina Tumkovsky and for Hélène Dudin, whose teaching time has, naturally, been drastically reduced; and Andrei Kramarevsky, who doesn't teach girls, as Pierre Vladimiroff and Stanley Williams did. Taking the place of such luminaries as Vladimiroff, his wife, Felia Doubrovska, Alexandra Danilova, Muriel Stuart (who danced in Pavlova's company), Williams (who, despite his Bournonville-style background, stuck to the Vaganova style) and Diana Adams (a former principal who tried to outdo Tumkovsky in her Russian approach) are members of City Ballet, many of whom were not principals. The school badly needs an infusion of Russian blood.

In his preface to Lincoln Kirstein and Muriel Stuart's illustrated book, *The Classic Ballet: Basic Technique and Terminology* (1952), Balanchine insists that the technique explicated by Stuart is the same as the one he learned in St. Petersburg and the same as the one taught at his School of American Ballet. He calls such technique "unalterable" and its teaching "a conservative calling." He deems the drawings as "more accurate as an approximation of ideal perfection, because they have been corrected and recorrected, which is impossible in photography, however vivid or charming its accidental results may be."

The lack of, or downright wrong, technique has marred much of this winter's eight-week season, which started in January.

Poor alignment: Sofiane Sylve is a perverse choice for guest artist this season. Her photo alone in the season's programs shows you how badly she hoists up her right hip to raise her right leg into second position (to the side). A serious no-no, and a cheating way to get the leg higher, to achieve greater extension. (Hips should remain even.) She reminds me of her French compatriot Sylvie Guillem. Sylve has been trading leads with the superb principal Maria Kowroski in Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* and *Serenade*, and the comparisons invite ridicule. Instead of flapping her arms like wings, as Kowroski does in the angel role in *Serenade*, Sylve wields them like fly swatters.

Elevation: Practically no one can jump anymore, and the few who can don't jump very high. Jumps, along with turns, are especially essential to the men, because they denote masculinity and virility.

Landing on relevé or demi-pointe: This bad technique is actually advocated by Schorer in her book, and gives a fudgy look to the allegro passages of ballets, as if everyone is tiptoeing around. The correct way to land is softly, toe first then down flat to the heel into a plié, or knee bend. Landing on the ball of your foot and not following through with the heel on the floor does several terrible things to the look of dance: It prevents the dancer from getting a decent plié, to prepare for the jump (the plié with heel to floor enables the dancer to jump higher: Think Michael Jordan). Of course, the heel-to-floor plié preparation must be done quickly and unnoticeably, otherwise you look like "Heave-ho. I weigh 300

This is Diane Rafferty's third article on dance for The Nation.

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pounds." Plié-ing in relevé tends to produce knotty muscles in the calves, and quite a few New York City Ballet dancers, notably the principal Wendy Whelan, have this problem. Not putting the heel to the floor nullifies the horizontal plane, which is supposed to emphasize the vertical plane: It takes away that beautifully tactile sense of the floor that the basic foot positions rely on and that, in turn, form the foundation of ballet. How can you defy gravity if you don't acknowledge it? In a quick combination of steps, the spectator needs to sense the lovely brushing through fifth or first positions—which, by definition, require the heel to the floor—in order to be dazzled by footwork.

Fussy gestures by men; overdeveloped muscles in women: Too many men are flapping their hands. Tumkovsky once reprimanded a boy in our class, who kept splaying his fingers artistically: "What you make me *Swan Lake*? You not girl!" If the men don't look interested in the women they're dancing with, the spectator rightly wonders why they're dancing together. By the same token, many women look muscle-bound, ropy and tense in the neck. Presumably they're working with weights and doing *The New York City Ballet Workout*, a set of strengthening exercises on video for sale on the mezzanine of the State Theatre. Projecting masculinity and femininity has nothing to do with a dancer's sexual orientation and everything to do with acting, which is part of ballet. Without "*la différence*," a pas de deux has no sexual tension, which is the underlying drama of all Balanchine's ballets, including the so-called plotless ones. As Balanchine once said, "Boy meets girl. They fall in love. How much story you want?"

Overcrossed fifths: Sometimes the men cheat and slightly overcross their feet in fifth position, to get a cleaner look because they are usually less turned out than women. Now many of the women are doing it too. (Correct fifth has the legs turned out, one foot in front of the other with the heel of the back foot lining up with the first joint of the front foot's big toe, or at most the end of the toe. The toe in front should not project past the heel in back.) In Schorer's book, the female dancer demonstrating the steps in photographs consistently overcrosses fifth position. Peter Boal, the best male Balanchine dancer left and a teacher at the school, is photographed in perfect position. Overcrossing fifth looks bad because it creates a zigzag effect and turns the dancer's body away from *en face*, or facing directly, the audience—again, a key element of ballet. In order to appreciate choreography, the audience must always have a clear sense of the geometry of space, direction and timing. Principal Yvonne Borrée is guilty of overcrossing her fifths, yet, inexplicably, doesn't snap her legs shut when she's supposed to in beats in the air, and makes sticks out of her arms: In allegro roles such as the lead in *Raymonda Variations* and *Square Dance*, she produces a questionable shape: She turns Balanchine's juicy roles into bloodless ghosts.

Thank heaven for those dancers at City Ballet who are carrying the torch for Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. Peter Boal continues to clarify Balanchine's modernism with his classical technique. But the company's director, Peter Martins, should accord this marvelous danseur more respect and not cast him in the bravura virtuoso lead of *Raymonda Variations*, which Boal manages, although he is at an age when stamina can become a problem. Maria Kowroski continues to improve and exalt, seeming to channel the former star Suzanne Farrell in many roles created for or retuned to Farrell. Her performance in Robert Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, one of my favorite Balanchines, was sensational without being flashy, despite Richard Moredock's funereal pacing at the piano. (Kowroski is a self-starter: Years ago I watched her rehearse the role of Terpsichore in *Apollo*. She asked Karin von Aroldingen, a former principal who was coaching her in the role, whether the step she was doing was *développé à la seconde*, an unfurling of the leg to the side, or devant, or to the front. Von Aroldingen replied, "Sort of in-between." There is no such thing as in-between, of course, and I noticed that in performance, Kowroski did it properly, first to the side, then slowly turning the upper body toward it to the front.) But she mustn't lift or lose any weight: There's a little tension creeping into her neck. Alexandra Ansanelli gave a suitably delirious performance in her role in the Schumann, despite wretched support from her partner. Many of the dancers look better in Robbins's ballets than in Balanchine's, perhaps because Robbins (1918–98) relied less on classic technique than Balanchine did; but Rachel Rutherford, a soloist, is shining in both. In the lyrical sweep of her adagio, she reminds me of the former principal Maria Calegari, except Rutherford is better: Calegari rarely bothered to rein in her hyperextension, turning out a good 200 degrees instead of 180 degrees. Rutherford is more controlled. Abi Stafford, another soloist, gave a clean performance of *Square Dance*. Benjamin Millepied, a principal, outdid José Manuel Carreño over at the American Ballet Theatre, in the same role as the Latin-dancing showoff sailor in Robbins's wonderful *Fancy Free*. He kept the rumba movements subtle and restrained, as they should be. (Carreño, a few months earlier at City Center, jerked his bottom up and down and camped it up to the point where the audience burst out laughing.) And as soon as she walked out onto the stage, presenting herself as a classically trained ballerina, Alina Dronova stood out in the corps. She just joined the company from Ukraine. In *Serenade*, Dronova was so carried away with Tchaikovsky's romantic score and dancing so all-out that she fell, quickly pulled herself together and carried on. Balanchine would have been proud. ■

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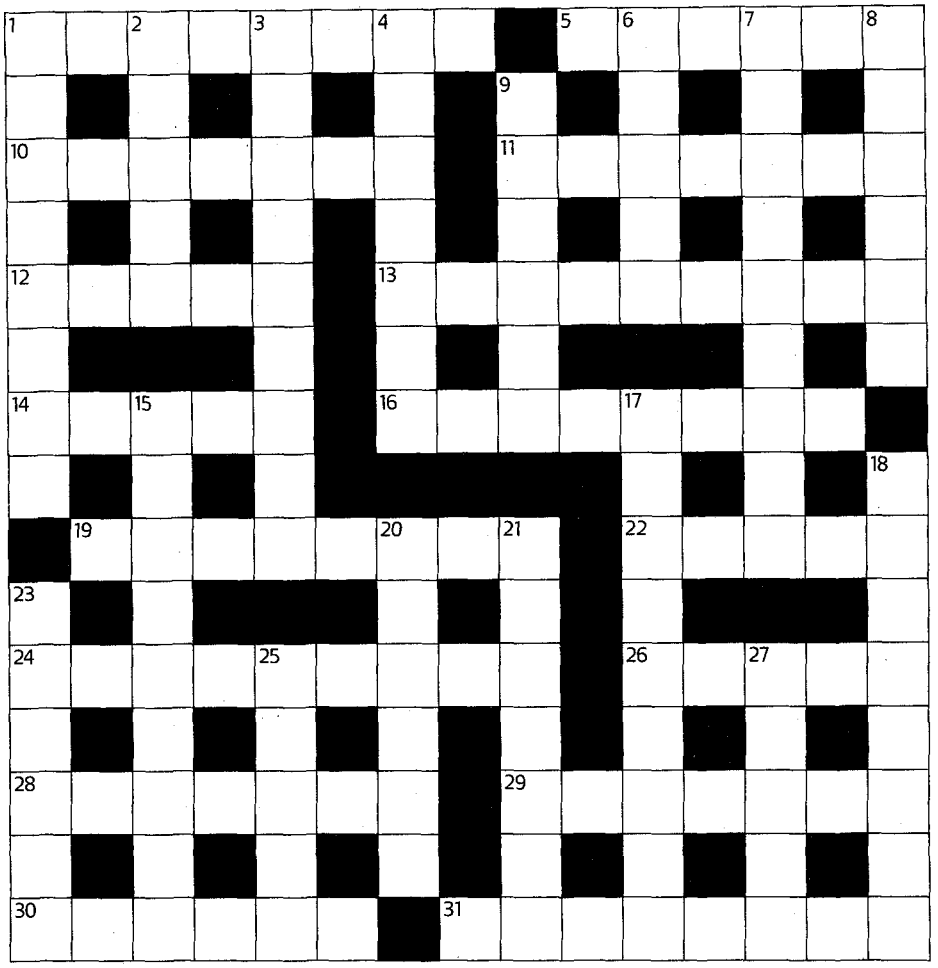
PUZZLE NO. 2882

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** What the dentist is used to seeing, particularly out West. (4-4,6)

10 Get a man confused, and he will possibly pin this on by way of ID. (4,3)

11 One who stopped to pick up the apples loses a place equivalent to "the Home of the Brave." (7)

12 Plane crash, due to trouble with the instruments shown here. (5)

13 For example, nothing a person takes to the CIA organization—since one thinks of himself first. (9)

14 and **16** Implying the guys with bars or stripes are rather small-minded? (5,8)

19 The type that puts on a courageous expression—being first to sort of fold, holding such a high card. (8)

22 Hidden trove which really is rather out in the open! (5)

24 One might answer a challenge with them, though only a fool returns with such old weapons. (9)

26 Evidently couldn't stand, that is, for the the composer. (5)

28 Pass on with less trouble, being rather noisy on the way. (7)

29 The branch of theology dealing with peace and conciliation, though it starts with anger, having a not-quite-nice point. (7)

30 and **31** Not necessarily shown by the two-faced types who sit through such long screen offerings. (6-8)

DOWN

1 Twist part of the plumbing that the air comes through. (8)

2 One of two friends who rose as the wandering type. (5)

3 Being faced by better sportsmen, the traveling troupe did this. (9)

4 Nowadays one wouldn't cast aspersions on the artist by referring to his beginnings like this! (2,5)

6 One can almost hear the Englishman works on his fire with such a dance. (A onetime President has a whirl with it, too.) (5)

7 He might meet you at the door where the cornice, e.g., has been completely destroyed. (9)

8 Improperly set, can show an upright position. (6)

9 Put a fifty in second place, and the result would be a tiebreaker instead of a "get-even" situation. (6)

15 It is probably not the habit of determinedly single girls. (9)

17 Those found at this place are likely to be flappers, but watch here while they speak in naval fashion. (5-4)

18 Underlines the point, having long hair. (8)

20 Death fell in it, according to Shakespeare. (6)

21 In a series fit to be placed in one area of the compass. (2,5)

23 Dug up the garden, but a few extra words might be taken up with what might be a dead end. (6)

25 This was seen way up in the middle of the air. (5)

27 One who makes an effort to be in Germany, on the Moselle. (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/crossword.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2881

C	L	U	B	S	A	N	D	W	I	C	H	E	S	
L		N		L		I		A		A		N		D
I	L	L	W	I	L	L		V	E	N	E	T	I	A
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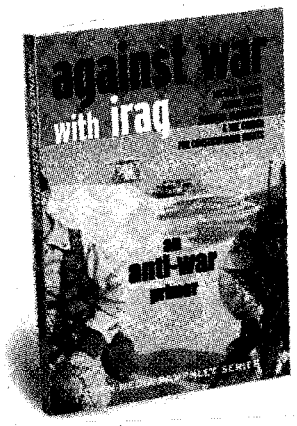

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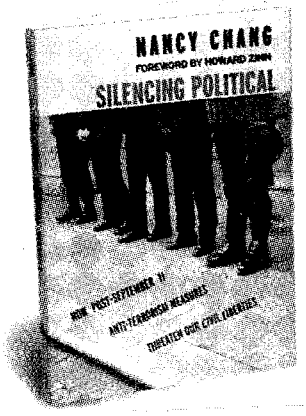

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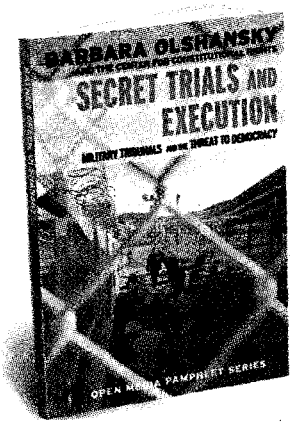
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